NATION

Online betting app: Robin Uthappa, Yuvraj Singh, Sonu Sood summoned

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Mother Dairy cuts prices to pass on GST benefits

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Apollo Tyres bags India jersey rights for Rs 579 crore

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in www.magzter.com 17 SEPTEMBER 2025 | WEDNESDAY | BENGALURU | 24 RABIUL AWWAL, 1447 AH Vol 4 | Issue No 254 | Pages: 8

MODI TO TURN 75 WITH A BASH IN MP

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi turns 75 on 17 September, he will celebrate it in Madhya Pradesh by kicking off a fortnight-long nationwide health and nutrition campaign. Besides, at least 1,300 items gifted to Modi are part of an e-auction that begins in New Delhi on 17 September. A five-day exhibition on his life and works will be held at Kolkata's Indian Museum too. Founded in 1814, it is the largest multipurpose museum in the Asia-Pacific. Maharashtra will see at least one lakh cataract surgeries performed during a fortnight-long drive. Delhi is among the many BJP states to begin various welfare schemes to mark the PM's birthday. Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta released a song titled: 'Namo Pragati Dilli — Baal Swar Se Rashtra Swar Tak'. It has students singing in 21 different languages.

15 killed, 16 missing in Uttarakhand cloudburst

Hundreds stranded across the state as rivers enter spate

DEHRADUN, 16 SEPT

Cloudbursts and heavy rains in Uttarakhand's capital Dehradun and its neighbouring areas killed at least 15 people and left over 500 stranded in different locations. At least 16 were missing at the time of publishing.

Most rivers were in spate following the showers. The Tamsa river, also known as the Tons river, inundated the famous Tapkeshwar temple on its bank, submerging the gigantic Hanuman statue near its entrance up to the shoulders. The temple's priest, Bipin Joshi, said that he has not seen the river waters rise so high in 30 years.

The Disaster Management Authority said 15 bodies were retrieved in Dehradun on Tuesday.

Disaster Management Secretary Vinod Kumar Suman said teams are engaged in relief and rescue operations in the affected areas. About 400-500 students trapped due to waterlogging at the Devbhoomi Institute campus in Paundha area of Dehradun were reportedly rescued by an SDRF team.

Sahastradhara, Maldevta, Santla Devi and Dalanwala were the worst-hit by the disaster, according to the district disaster management office. Sahastradhara received 192 mm of rain, followed by Maldevta (141.5 mm), Hathi Barkala and Jolly Grant (92.5mm each) and Kalsi (83.5 mm).

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami visited the rain-affected areas of Dehradun district to review the situation on the ground. Local MLAs and senior officials accompanied him.

Speaking to press in the rain-hit Maldevta area, he said, "All rivers are in spate following heavy rains. Roads have been breached at 25 to 30 places. Approach roads are cut off. Houses and government properties have been damaged. Normal life is severely affected. Rescue teams are working on a war footing to restore normalcy." —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Houses were destroyed after a cloudburst and landslides in Dehradun, Uttarakhand **PHOTO: PTI**

WHERE THERE'S A WILL

Trade talks with US went well: India

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

Tuesday's day-long discussions with the visiting US team on a bilateral trade deal were positive, and both sides agreed to push for an early and mutually beneficial conclusion of the agreement, the Commerce Ministry said.

"It was decided to intensify efforts to achieve early conclusion of a mutually beneficial trade agreement," the ministry said in a statement after a day-long meeting with the US officials.

The discussions with visiting US Chief Negotiator Brendan Lynch on the proposed bilateral trade agreement were positive and forward looking.

Lynch, Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia, reached the national capital on Monday evening to hold deliberations on the proposed India-US bilateral trade agreement.

From India's side, the discussions were led by Rajesh Agarwal, Special Secretary, Department of Commerce.

An official said that both sides will continue the discussions in virtual mode.

This was the first visit by a high-ranking US trade official after the US imposed a 25 per cent tariff and an additional 25 per cent penalty for buying Russian oil on Indian goods entering the American market.

So far, five rounds of negotiations have been held, and the talks for the sixth round, which were scheduled from 25-29 August, were postponed following the imposition of the high import duties. A senior commerce ministry official said this meeting should not be viewed as the sixth round, but as a precursor to it. —*PTI*

THIS IS THE 1ST MAJOR TALKS AFTER INDIA GOT

50% TARIFFS

Azhar's family 'torn into pieces' in Op Sindoor: JeM

Masood Ilyas Kashmiri (L) and Masood Azhar (R) **PHOTO: X**

LAHORE, 16 SEPT

A Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) commander has admitted that the family of the terror group's chief Masood Azhar was "torn into pieces" in India's Operation Sindoor on 7 May in the outfit's headquarters in Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

In a viral video uploaded to a YouTube channel on Tuesday, JeM commander Ilyas Kashmiri fumes over the Indian attack that killed the family members of Azhar. He also brags about fighting in neighbouring countries for Pakistan.

Standing among gun-wielding men, Kashmiri is reportedly speaking in Urdu at the Mission Mustafa Conference in Pakistan's Punjab province on 6 September.

Tensions between India and Pakistan soared after terrorists killed 26 people, mostly civilians, in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam on 22 April. In retaliation, Indian armed forces carried out missile strikes on targets, including Bahawalpur, a JeM stronghold, as part of Operation Sindoor.

Bahawalpur became JeM hub after the release of Azhar in exchange for the hijacked passengers of IC-814 in 1999. Elusive Azhar, a "global terrorist", is believed to be hiding in Bahawalpur.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, along with Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal Asim Munir, are likely to meet US President Donald Trump on 25 September on the sidelines of the UNGA. —*PTI*

HC nullifies Cong MLA Nanjegowda's 2023 win in Malur

BENGALURU, 16 SEPT

The Karnataka High Court on Tuesday annulled the election of Congress legislator KY Nanjegowda, who represents the Malur constituency in Kolar district, and ordered a recount of votes cast in the 2023 State assembly elections. The ruling came from a bench led by Justice R Devadas, which was deliberating on an election petition lodged by BJP's KS Manjunath Gowda, who was defeated by Nanjegowda.

The petition cited alleged irregularities during the counting process. After nearly two years of legal proceedings, the court ruled in favour of a recount, thus declaring Nanjegowda's election invalid. However, in response to a request from Nanjegowda's legal counsel, the High Court has temporarily stayed its own order for 30 days. This interim relief permits the Congress MLA to appeal to the Supreme Court. If the apex court does not intervene within the specified timeframe, Nanjegowda's seat will be vacated. —*PTI*

Devotee money cannot be used for marriage halls: SC

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

The Supreme Court of India ruled that money donated by devotees to temples cannot be used for constructing marriage halls, in response to a plea against a government order permitting such use of temple funds in Tamil Nadu. A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta expressed that donations are intended for temple improvements rather than commercial ventures. The government had previously announced plans for constructing marriage halls with temple funds amounting to Rs 80 crore, sparking legal contention. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

K'taka to give ₹40L/acre for UKP-3 land acquisition

BENGALURU, 16 SEPT

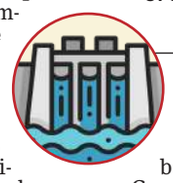
The Karnataka government on Tuesday decided to provide Rs 40 lakh per acre for irrigated land and Rs 30 lakh per acre for dry land to farmers whose lands will be acquired for phase three of the Upper Krishna Project (UKP-3).

The decision was taken at a special cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Phase three involves raising the Almatti dam height from 519 to 524 metres, increasing storage by 100 tmc ft, and requiring 1.33 lakh acres, including 75,563 acres that will be submerged.

It will boost the Almatti dam storage by 100 tmc ft.

1.33 LAKH ACRES

of land are needed for the project



For canal works, 51,000 acres are needed, of which 23,000 acres have already been acquired. Compensation will be Rs 30 lakh per acre for irrigated land and Rs 25 lakh for dry land. Payments will be spread over three years.

Siddaramaiah said the "historic," project will cost over Rs 70,000 crore. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

'GAZA IS BURNING'

Israel launched a massive ground invasion in Gaza City, shortly after its Defence Minister Israel Katz said that "Gaza is burning". Thousands of people have fled the city

PHOTO: PTI

>>>MORE ON PG 6

Trump files $15B defamation lawsuit against NYT

NEW YORK, 16 SEPT

President Donald Trump has initiated a $15 billion defamation lawsuit against The New York Times and four of its journalists, as detailed in court documents filed in US District Court in Florida. The lawsuit references various articles and a book published prior to the 2024 elections, alleging a persistent pattern of "intentional and malicious defamation" by the newspaper. The lawsuit claims the defendants published false statements with "reckless disregard" for their truthfulness. In a Truth Social post, Trump accused The NYT of being a "mouthpiece" for the radical left. —*PTI*

>>>>More on Page 6

A MATTER OF FAITH

SC to examine validity of anti-conversion laws

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stated that it will consider a batch of pleas filed seeking a stay on anti-conversion laws that have been enforced in various states.

A bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran sought the response of various State governments to pleas challenging anti-conversion laws within a period of four weeks.

The Court has listed the matter to be heard next in six weeks.

The move consolidates challenges to laws in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Gujarat, among others, reported Bar and Bench.

During the hearing, the counsel appearing for one of the various petitioners submitted that various states, especially Uttar Pradesh, have made their anti-conversion laws stringent. Violation of the law in UP comes with a minimum sentence of 20 years, the counsel argued.

Further, bail is virtually impossible, particularly in interfaith marriage cases. The 'twin conditions' for bail, which are found in stringent legislations such as Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, have been brought in.

The court said the matter needs to be dealt with. It listed the matter to be heard next in six weeks. —*ANI*

Apart from HP, the BJP is in power in all other states where the laws are implemented

HANDSHAKE GATE: ICC JUNKS PCB'S REQUEST TO REMOVE MATCH REFEREE

DUBAI, 16 SEPT

The ICC has declined the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) request to remove match referee Andy Pycroft from the official panel for the ongoing Asia Cup, following the "no handshake" incident during Pakistan's match against India. PCB had alleged that Pycroft instructed captain Salman Ali Agha not to shake hands with India's Suryakumar Yadav at the toss. "ICC replied to PCB stating that Pycroft won't be removed and their plea has been rejected," an ICC source confirmed.

Pakistan's team manager, Naved Cheema, also filed a complaint with the Asian Cricket Council, contending Pycroft's insistence led to a failure to exchange team sheets. Reports claim PCB chief Mohsin Naqvi ordered the dismissal of Director of Cricket Operations Usman Walha for not informing Agha of the policy. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 8

Govt to give Rs 40 lakh/acre to farmers for UKP-3

CM claims the compensation will be paid in 3 financial years; UKP-3 will raise the height of Almatti dam

BENGALURU, 16 SEPT

The State government on Tuesday decided to provide compensation of Rs 40 lakh per acre for irrigated land and Rs 30 lakh per acre for dry land to farmers whose lands will be acquired for phase three of the Upper Krishna Project (UKP-3).

The decision was taken at a special Cabinet meeting held under the leadership of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Phase Three of the UKP project involves raising the height of the Almatti dam from 519 to 524 metres, which will increase storage capacity by 100 tmc ft.

This requires acquisition of 1.33 lakh acres, including 75,563 acres that will get submerged.

"There was a demand from farmers, ministers and MLAs from the region that a minimum of Rs 40 lakh per acre has to be paid for irrigated land and Rs 30 lakh per acre for dry land, and accordingly we have decided in the cabinet to pay the same amount," Siddaramaiah told press after the meeting.

He said for canal work more 51,000 acre of land is required, and the work has been completed in over 23,000 acre, for which compensation of Rs 30 lakh for irrigated land and Rs 25 lakh for dry land has been decided.

"The compensation will be paid in three financial years. Also consent awards will be given as the public representatives have taken the responsibility of convincing the farmers. We are confident that they will accept," he claimed.

Responding to a question, Siddaramaiah said every year about Rs 15,000-Rs 20,000 crore will be spent. On the whole, the project will cost over Rs 70,000 crore.

Terming the cabinet decision as "historic", the CM said, in 2023, the previous BJP government had decided to give Rs 24 lakh and Rs 20 lakh per acre respectively for irrigated and dry land. "Farmers did not accept it and it was not implemented."

Siddaramaiah also urged the Union government to issue a gazette notification allowing the State government to increase the height of the Almatti dam by issuing a gazette notification.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that the government would also create a new authority for land acquisition.

"As per the provision under Section 51 of The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013, we will set up Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Compensation Authority. This Authority will be led by a Judge appointed by the Chief Justice," he said.

DyCM DK Shivakumar with CM Siddaramaiah and his Cabinet colleagues during a special Council of Ministers meeting on land acquisition for UKP-3, at Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru, on Tuesday **PHOTO: X/DKS**

> **Maharashtra CM doesn't have any option (but to accept our decision).... We are confident that Telangana and Andhra Pradesh will consent for this project**
>
> -DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

MANDYA GETS RS 1,970 CRORE

Shivakumar said on X that the government had sanction Rs 1,970 crore for irrigation in Mandya.

He termed it a "historic" project and said it was the largest grant for the district.

—Salar News with Agencies

THE LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

- 1,33,867 acres of land set to be acquired.
- 75,563 acres will be submerged
- 51,837 acres for canals.
- 6,467 acres for the rehabilitation.

20,000 cases ongoing, which DKS hopes will be resolved through arbitration under the Land Acquisition Act of 2013

IN TERMS OF MONEY:

Total project cost
Rs 70,000 crore

The drought-prone districts of Vijayapura Bagalkot, Kalaburagi, Yadgir and Raichur are expected to benefit

Rs 15,000-Rs 20,000 crore will be spent annually.

Road accident victims get extra Rs 1L compensation

BENGALURU, 16 SEPT

The State government has approved an additional Rs 1 lakh in financial assistance for road accident victims, which supplements the existing Rs 1.5 lakh cashless treatment benefit under the Centre's Cashless Treatment Scheme for Road Accident Victims (CTRAV) 2025.

The decision followed a proposal from the Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust (SAST), which cited the state's fifth position in the country in terms of accident-related fatalities.

In State, around 40,000 accidents are recorded annually, resulting in about 11,000 deaths each year, it stated.

The scheme will be implemented within the existing budgetary allocation of the State, it added.

According to the notification, the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH), under Section 162 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, has notified the CTRAV scheme 2025. Under this scheme, free emergency medical treatment up to a limit of Rs 1.5 lakh per person is provided during the "golden hour" (first one hour) and for up to seven days after the accident.

"While the Rs 1.5 lakh assistance under CTRAV is generally sufficient, there may be special cases—such as multiple organ failure, ventilator support, or critical care—where treatment beyond seven days becomes necessary," it stated.

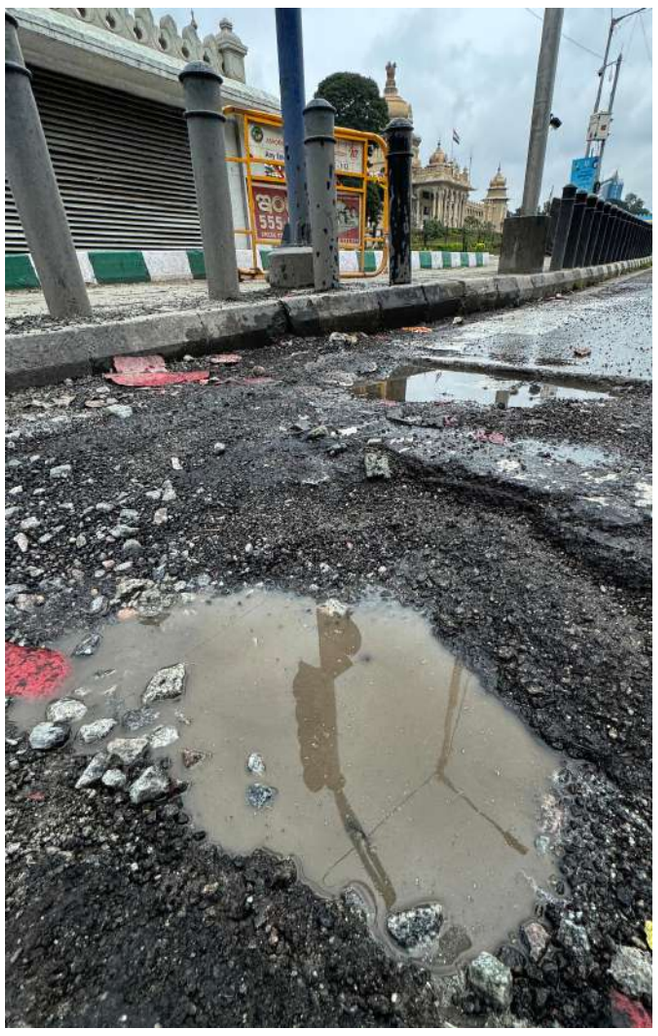
It further noted that accident victims treated in unregistered hospitals meeting prescribed criteria may also require continued treatment after stabilisation. Instead of shifting such patients to other hospitals, providing State-funded support for their treatment at the same hospital would enable timely, evidence-based medical care.

Under the revised state scheme, patients on ventilator support, those with multi-organ failure, or those requiring other critical care who continue treatment beyond the seven-day limit of CTRAV shall be eligible for the additional top-up of Rs 1 lakh under the package.

The implementation of the State's additional support will be carried out through the NHA/MoRTH TMS 2.0 platform.

—PTI

ACCIDENT PRONE



A deep pothole in Gopala Gowda Circle near the Karnataka power house that has been left unattended by GBA in Bengaluru. During monsoon season, roads tend to get damaged faster, resulting in rise in the number of potholes. A major number of road accidents reported occur due to people not being aware of the pothole depth **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

Land acquisition for GBIT is illegal, stop it: Ashoka tells govt

BENGALURU, 16 SEPT

BJP leader R Ashoka on Tuesday termed the acquisition of land in Bengaluru South (Ramanagara) district, for the proposed Greater Bengaluru Integrated Township (GBIT) project, as "illegal", and urged the state government to immediately withdraw from it.

The Leader of Opposition in the Assembly was addressing the farmers, who are protesting against the land acquisition, at Bhairamangala, along with other party leaders like CN Ashwath Narayan.

Two farmers, including a woman, allegedly tried to consume pesticide as a mark of protest, but police and those nearby stopped them immediately from doing so, according to police sources.

GBIT, which is touted as India's first 'AI City', is envisioned as a second central business district (CBD) for Bengaluru. Powered by Artificial Intelligence, it is planned to be developed on the work-live-play model, at just 30 km from Bengaluru.

R Ashoka **PHOTO: PTI**

"The Congress government is acquiring 9,600 acre of land in Bidadi, Byramangala, and Kanchugaranahalli in the name of Greater Bengaluru. Of this, 6,500 acre are agricultural land,"Ashoka said.

He said, "There are more than 10 lakh coconut and mango trees here. Daily production of 6 lakh liters of milk reaches KMF (Karnataka Milk Federation). More than 3,000 farmers and labourers depend on agriculture. They (govt) are acquiring such fertile lands and allotting sites."

Noting that the Housing Board has already acquired 500 acre of land and formed sites, but no one has constructed houses there, the BJP leader said, the Kempegowda Layout and Shivaram Karanth Layout near Bengaluru are still mostly vacant.

"Acquiring fertile land when so much land is lying empty is a betrayal of the farmers. Previously, when HD Kumaraswamy was the CM, he had returned the land to the farmers saying no acquisition was needed. Now, the Congress government is scheming to loot the land and plans to make money from real estate," he said.

"Deputy CM DK Shivakumar (who is from the district) should denotify it without any conditions and just leave it. The farmers have said they don't want any facilities, they want their land to remain as it is. Therefore the government should respect the stand of the majority of farmers," he urged.

—PTI

Caste census will divide Veerashaiva-Lingayat: BJP

BENGALURU, 16 SEPT

State BJP President BY Vijayendra on Tuesday alleged that the agenda of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah-led Congress government behind the "caste census" is to divide the Veerashaiva-Lingayat community.

BJP leaders from Veerashaiva-Lingayat community, such as former chief ministers BS Yediyurappa, Basavaraj Bommai, Jagadish Shettar, Union Minister of State V Somanna among others, held a meeting to discuss the strategy ahead of the caste census.

The State's Social and Educational Survey, popularly known as the caste census, will be conducted between 22 September and 7 October at an estimated cost of Rs 420 crore.

He said that senior leaders have been given responsibility to hold discussions with the All India Veerashaiva Mahasabha (considered apex body of the community) and senior seers.

Also, Members of Samajika Nyaya Jagruti Vedike including **MP Yaduveer Wadiyar** lead a Rajbhavan Chalo march and submitted a memorandum objecting to the caste-survey in Bengaluru.

PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD

Meanwhile, asserting that Veerashaiva and Lingayat are the same, Forest, Biology and Environment Minister Eshwar B Khandre said that a Veerashaiva-Lingayat Unity Conference will be held under his chairmanship on 19 September in Hubballi. He clarified that the State government is conducting educational and social surveys to provide social justice to all and is not engaged in any activity to divide religions.

—Salar News with Agencies

Three doctors suspended for accepting bribes

BENGALURU, 16 SEPT

The Karnataka Medical Education Department has suspended three doctors who allegedly accepted bribes while serving on the National Medical Commission's (NMC) inspection team to provide favourable reports for a medical institution. The suspension order was issued by Principal Secretary Mohammad Mohsin.

The suspended doctors are Dr Chaitra MS, associate professor at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical College and Research Institute, Bengaluru; Manjappa CN, professor and head of the Department of Orthopaedics at Mandya Institute of Medical Sciences; and Ashok Shelke, assistant professor at the Bidar Institute of Medical Sciences.

According to reports, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has already registered a First Information Report (FIR) in the case following its investigation. The CBI informed the department via email about the findings.

"Based on the findings, the Department proceeded with the suspension of the three doctors in accordance with service rules," the statement said, highlighting the seriousness of the allegations. *—PTI*

Dharmasthala case: Court rejects bail plea of whistleblower

MANGALURU, 16 SEPT

The Belthangady court on Tuesday rejected the bail plea of the masked complainant for the Dharmasthala case.

The complainant, who has been in judicial custody in Shivamogga Jail, was produced before the court on Tuesday. He had sought bail on the grounds of "ill health" and "family responsibilities". Considering the seriousness of the case, the court declined the bail.

He was arrested on 23 August on charges of perjury by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the charges in connection with the case, after it claimed to have noticed irregularities in his statements.

The SIT had questioned him extensively about his statements and the circumstances under which he made the allegations.

A controversy erupted after the complainant claimed to have buried hundred of bodies in Dharmasthala over two decades. *—PTI*

Women activists & volunteers attended a talk on 'who killed women in Dharmasthala' at Gandhi Bhavan in City **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

HC RESERVES ORDER

Production houses move HC over Rs 200 cinema tickets

BENGALURU, 16 SEPT

Days after the government capped cinema tickets rate at Rs 200 across the State, leading production house Hombale Films and other stakeholders have moved the High Court against the order.

The High Court reserved its order on the interim plea.

According to a press statement, four Public Interest Litigations (PILs) have been filed by Hombale Films, the Multiplex Association of India, Keystone Entertainment, and VK Films. The petitioners contend that the state's move, while excluding taxes, will hurt revenue and box office collections, particularly for big-budget releases.

The timing of the regulation has sparked concern in the film industry, as actor-director Rishab Shetty's highly anticipated 'Kantara: Chapter 1', a prequel to the 2022 blockbuster 'Kantara' is set to hit screens on 2 October. Hombale Films is the producer of the flicks.

- PILs filed by Hombale Films, the Multiplex Association of India, Keystone Entertainment, and VK Films

"The uniform ticket pricing across multiplexes will reduce income and result in financial losses for producers and theatre owners," theT said.

Meanwhile, the State Film Chamber of Commerce has opposed the petitions, stating that capping on ticket price was essential and the government had acted on the representation given by the KFCC.

The State government issued the cap last week through amendments to the Karnataka Cinemas (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2025. The notification, however, exempts multi-screen theatres with premium facilities and fewer than 75 seats. *—PTI with Agencies*

SC recommends 3 judicial officers as judges for HC

BENGALURU, 16 SEPT

The Supreme Court Collegium, headed by Chief Justice BR Gavai, has recommended the appointment of three judicial officers as judges of the Karnataka High Court, while recommending similar steps for four other High Courts.

The three-member collegium, also comprising Justices Surya Kant and Vikram Nath, passed five separate resolutions in a meeting held on Monday, recommending the appointments and confirmations.

For the Karnataka High Court, three judicial officers were cleared for elevation. They are Geetha Kadaba Bharatharaja Setty, Muralidhara Pai Borkatte, and Tyagaraja Narayan Inavally.

The collegium also confirmed Justice Kurubarahalli Venkataramareddy Aravind, currently serving as an additional judge, as a permanent judge of the court.

At present, the Karnataka High Court has a sanctioned strength of 46 judges against the approved strength of 62.

The Madras High Court also saw confirmations, with the collegium recommending that Justice N Senthilkumar and Justice G Arul Murugan, both serving as additional judges, be made permanent judges of the court.

In the Himachal Pradesh High Court, the collegium approved the elevation of two senior advocates -- Jiya Lal Bhardwaj and Romesh Verma -- as judges.

—Salar News with Agencies

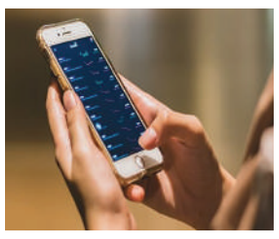


PHOTO: FREEPIK

2G mobile internet services restored in Doda

DODA/JAMMU, 16 SEPT

After a week-long suspension, 2G mobile internet services were restored in Doda district, Jammu and Kashmir, early on Tuesday. This follows protests sparked by the detention of AAP MLA Mehraj Malik on 8 September. While local residents welcomed the return of internet services, many reported challenges with online banking due to the low bandwidth. "The government should immediately restore 4G services on the mobile phones to provide relief to the people," urged Doda resident Feroz Ahmad. Amid recent heavy rainfall and unrest, banks have seen long queues, with ATMs reportedly running dry. Doda's Senior Superintendent of Police, Sandeep Mehta, cautioned against using social media to disturb the peace. *—PTI*

2 scribes get notices for 'defaming' Adani

AHMEDABAD, 16 SEPT

A Gandhinagar magistrate's court has summoned journalists Abhisar Sharma and Raju Parulekar to appear in person on 20 September following defamation complaints from Adani Group. The conglomerate claims that Sharma, a YouTuber, and Parulekar, a blogger, disseminated false and damaging information about its reputation. Adani's lawyer, Sanjay Thakkar, stated, "The notices were issued under section 223 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)." The complaints, referencing a YouTube video and social media posts alleging land grabs and political favours, invoke sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which are akin to Indian Penal Code sections on defamation. If the cases proceed, both may face up to two years' imprisonment or fines. *—PTI*

EC to train WB poll officials on voter roll revision

KOLKATA, 16 SEPT

The Election Commission is set to commence training for poll officials in West Bengal starting Tuesday, ahead of a special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. Assembly elections are scheduled for next year. State CEO Manoj Agarwal, along with Additional CEOs Dibyendu Das and Arindam Neogi, will lead the initial training aimed at equipping trainers to guide booth-level officers (BLOs) through the voter list revision process. Following the training of assistant district magistrates (ADMs) and electoral registration officers (EROs), BLOs will receive instructions to assist voters in completing necessary forms. Deputy Election Commissioner Gyanesh Bharti will review preparations during his visit later this week. *—PTI*

No tiff between TMC, Centre over border security

KOLKATA, 16 SEPT

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress and the BJP-led Centre are uniting in view of security at the border districts due to Nepal's protest. Bengal shares a 100-odd-km border -- including the vulnerable chicken's neck area in Siliguri -- with Nepal. The Himalayan nation has been witnessing a political upheaval with the Gen Z protests. Even after an interim government is in place, India has not relaxed the vigilance at the borde. "These are issues of national interest and on these issues, there is no Trinamool-BJP rift. We should be careful about national interest. We are united on the security issue in the border districts," Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said. *—PTI*

Ex-CM Baghel's son at helm of Rs 1,000 crore scam: ED

Scam occurred during Baghel's tenure as chief minister

RAIPUR, 16 SEPT

Chaitanya Baghel, son of former CM Bhupesh Baghel, was at the helm of the syndicate behind the "liquor scam" in Chhattisgarh and personally handled nearly Rs 1,000 crore generated from it.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) claimed Chaitanya knowingly assisted in the concealment, possession, acquisition and use of proceeds of crime, acting in conspiracy with other members of the syndicate.

It made the claims in its fourth supplementary prosecution complaint (chargesheet) filed before the court of district and additional sessions judge.

Chaitanya was arrested following a search at his house in Bhilai in Durg district.

The alleged Rs 2,500 crore liquor scam was orchestrated between 2019 and 2022.

The alleged scam resulted in a "massive loss" to the state exchequer and filled the pockets of the liquor syndicate beneficiaries.

Chaitanya Baghel projected his assets he purchased with the proceeds of the crime as untainted property *PHOTO: PTI*

To run the day-to-day operations of this syndicate, Anil Tuteja, an IAS officer, and businessman Anwar Dhebar were chosen as the front faces, it claimed.

Chaitanya is a recipient of "proceeds of crime," which he has layered in his real estate project and is projecting and claiming these assets so developed as untainted property.

On Chaitanya's instuctions, large amounts of cash were delivered to the then treasurer of the state Congress unit, Ram Gopal Agrawal and others.

Bansal allegedly used to collect these proceeds of crime from Anwar Dhebar via Dipen Chawda and thereafter these funds were delivered to Agarwal in coordination with Chaitanya. Agarwal is presently absconding.

Chaitanya had utilised proceeds of crime of Rs 18.90 crore in his real estate project, namely Vitthal Green and Rs 3.10 crore in his real estate firm M/s Baghel Developers and Associates, it claimed.

The state's economic offence wing registered an FIR on January, 2024 in the liquor scam.

The syndicate also charged quid pro quo bribes from main distillers to operate in Chhattisgarh so that they can form a cartel and divide the entire market share among themselves. *—PTI*

Palaniswami said that members who betrayed AIADMK have no place in the party *PHOTO: PTI*

AIADMK chief rules out return of expelled leaders

CHENNAI, 16 SEPT

AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami has ruled out the possibility of re-induction of expelled leaders like O Panneerselvam, saying those who "betrayed" the party have no place in it.

This comes amid calls for reunification from some leaders, including veteran KA Sengottaiyan.

He also praised the BJP-led Centre, saying it "protected the AIADMK government (in 2017) when some persons tried to topple it."

Palaniswami's virtually shutting the doors on Panneerselvam and another expelled leader TTV Dhinakaran came on a day when deposed party leader VK Sasikala and Sengottaiyan batted for reunification of AIADMK factions before the 2026 polls.

Referring to reports claiming he was meeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah to discuss AIADMK's internal issues, he said such news was reported after the party postponed the ongoing campaign schedule in Dharmapuri due to forecast of heavy rains.

The former CM was addressing a meeting here to commemorate the birth anniversary of Dravidian stalwart and late Chief Minister, CN Annadurai.

He charged some persons with trying to create an issue in the AIADMK with the help of a "stooge" who has now been identified. "Soon an end will be put to that."

Panneerselvam, who had rebelled against then AIADMK chief Sasikala after CM J Jayalalithaa's death in December 2016, had voted against the Palaniswami-led government in the 2017 trust vote.

His supporters had also allegedly vandalised the party headquarters here. *—PTI*

4,271 voters enrolled in single house in UP: AAP MP

LUCKNOW, 16 SEPT

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Sanjay Singh has accused Uttar Pradesh authorities of widespread electoral roll irregularities, claiming 4,271 voters are registered at a single house in Mahoba district. Singh highlighted previous cases of 243 and 185 voters in two houses, but this new case raises concerns about family sizes and electoral fraud.

Singh sarcastically remarked, "If there are 4,271 votes in one house, the family should have around 12,000 members."

He alleged collusion between the BJP and Election Commission, suggesting vote theft.

He added, "No one else needs to vote if the house owner contests the village pradhan's election."

Singh also alleged that "vote theft" started in Uttar Pradesh with the collusion of the BJP and the Election Commission.

AAP MP Sanjay Singh alleged collusion between the Centre and the Election Commission in vote theft *PHOTO: X/@AAMAADMIPARTY*

Singh also criticised land allotments in Bihar's Bhagalpur, where 1,050 acres were given to Gautam Adani's group at Re 1 per acre for 25 years, with purchase guarantees. Singh accused the government of prioritising profit over environment and farmers' welfare.

He also claimed that the land was acquired between 2012 and 2013 by the then BJP-JD(U) government, and compensation was paid to the farmers from the public exchequer.

The AAP leader also claimed that official records had classified the land as "barren" in around 70 per cent of its area, while there stand nearly 10 lakh trees in the land, including mango trees that produce the popular Malda variety of the fruit. *—PTI*

Rajnath asks Armed Forces to remain vigilant

KOLKATA, 16 SEPT

Asserting that the nature of warfare is continuously evolving, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday exhorted the Armed Forces to go beyond the traditional concepts of war and remain alert and ready to deal with invisible challenges.

He said that the recent global conflicts have underlined the relevance of a "technology-friendly" military.

Addressing the 16th Combined Commanders' Conference (CCC) 2025 in Kolkata, the Defence Minister asked the Armed Forces to be ready to deal with "invisible challenges emanating from unconventional threats such as information, ideological, ecological and biological warfare."

Singh emphasised the need for constant assessment of the changes taking place across the globe, and its impact on the security system of the country, in view of the turbulent global order, regional instability and the emerging security landscape.

He commended the Armed Forces for their "outstanding performance" and "exemplary professionalism" in the planning and execution of Operation Sindoor in May.

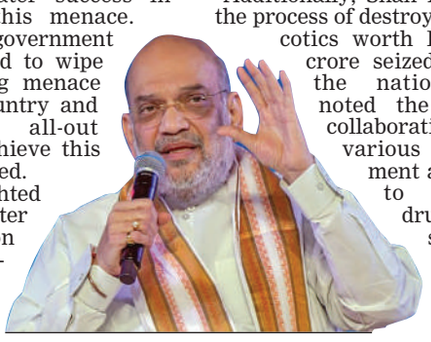
The defence minister underscored the importance of synergy among the Armed Forces as well as with other agencies, terming it as "essential" to deal with future challenges that may pose a threat to the country. *—PTI*

Modi govt keen on wiping out drug menace: Amit Shah

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

Union Home Minister Amit Shah affirmed the Narendra Modi government's unwavering commitment to eradicating narcotics from India during the Second National Conference of Heads of Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) on Tuesday.

Shah emphasised the urgent need to escalate actions against drug-related issues to achieve greater success in combating this menace.



"The Modi government is determined to wipe out the drug menace from the country and is making all-out efforts to achieve this goal," he stated.

He highlighted Prime Minister Modi's vision for 2047, aiming to transform India into a fully developed nation, secure from threats, with youth as the foundation of its future. "If our youth are determined, nothing is impossible," he added.

Discussing the operational dynamics of narcotics cartels, Shah identified three types—those at entry points, those handling distribution, and local sellers. He urged officers to take decisive action against these operations.

Additionally, Shah initiated the process of destroying narcotics worth Rs 4,794 crore seized across the nation and noted the NCB's collaboration with various government agencies to expose drug diversion networks. *—PTI*

Bihar class 12 pass outs to access interest-free education loans

PATNA, 16 SEPT

The Bihar government on Tuesday announced that interest-free loans will be provided to students who passed the class 12 board examinations under the Student Credit Card Scheme to help them pursue higher education.

Earlier, education loans of up to Rs 4 lakh were provided at an interest rate of 4 per cent to general male applicants, and 1 per cent to female, differently-abled, and transgender applicants.

The Bihar Student Credit Card Scheme has been in effect since 2 October, 2016.

A loan of up to Rs 2 lakh can now be repaid in 84 monthly instalments.

Kumar said the objective of his government is to ensure that students can pursue higher education.

PM's infiltration charge was 'diversionary tactics':Tejashwi

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's fulminations against infiltration in Bihar were "diversionary tactics" ahead of the assembly elections in the state.

Yadav said this of leaving for Jehanabad to launch "Bihar Adhikar Yatra", a veritable campaign for the upcoming assembly polls.

The PM had asserted that infiltration led to a "demographic crisis" and left common people "worried about the honour of their sisters and daughters".

The leader of the opposition in the Bihar assembly wondered if the ruling dispensation has been able to identify a single infiltrator in Bihar.

He has also shared on his X handle videos proclaiming the "arrival of the RJD." *—PTI*

8 MEGHALAYA MINISTERS RESIGN AMID CABINET RESHUFFLE

SHILLONG, 16 SEPT

Ahead of a reshuffle in the Meghalaya cabinet to be held later on Tuesday, eight of the total 12 ministers, including senior leaders AL Hek, Paul Lyngdoh and Ampareen Lyngdoh, have resigned from their posts, officials said.

Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, who heads NPP-led Meghalaya Democratic Alliance government, met Governor CH Vijayashankar at Raj Bhavan here and submitted the resignations of the ministers, they said.

The new entrants in the Cabinet are scheduled to be sworn in as ministers at Raj Bhavan at 5pm on Tuesday, an officials said.

"Eight ministers, who have resigned from their posts, are Ampareen Lyngdoh, Comingone Ymbon, Rakkam A Sangma and Abu Taher Mondal of the NPP, Paul Lyngdoh and Kyrmen Shylla of the UDP, Shakliar Warjri of the HSPDP and AL Hek of the BJP," another official said.

According to the rule, Meghalaya, with a 60-member assembly, cannot have more than 12 ministers, including the CM. *—PTI*

DISGUSTING MINDSET, SAYS BJP

PM's birthday is democracy's black day, says Congress; BJP hits back

MUMBAI, 16 SEPT

Congress MP Praniti Shinde on Tuesday kicked up a row by terming Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday as a "black day" for democracy, drawing sharp reactions from the BJP and Deputy CM Eknath Shinde of Shiv Sena.

Modi will be celebrating his 75th birthday on September 17.

"The country is reeling under an undeclared emergency with stolen votes," Praniti Shinde, a daughter of ex-Union minister and Congress veteran Sushilkumar Shinde.

She claimed that the Opposition's voice is being suppressed and votes of people are stolen. She also slammed the BJP-led Central government over the India-Pakistan cricket match.

The Deputy Chief Minister and Shiv Sena leader hit back at Praniti and termed the stints under the Congress-led governments before 2014 as "black days".

"India is seeing a change through development. The Congress is not able to digest the Viksit Bharat slogan given by the Prime Minister," Eknath Shinde said, adding that Modi had rooted out corruption, which was the hallmark of the Congress rule.

He slammed Congress for dragging Modi's late mother into politics by circulating an AI-generated video.

"She was a simple woman who never behaved like the PM's mother, but lived like a common person. Insulting the PM's mother is like insulting all mothers of the country, and nobody will tolerate it," he added.

Senior BJP leader and former minister Sudhir Mungantiwar said Congress has become a party of people who have a "disgusting" mindset.

"These things don't suit Congress. However, it is also true that it is not the party envisioned by Mahatma Gandhi. Congress leaders are using inappropriate words for ministers for their selfish gains and to hold on to power," he added. *—PTI*

Authorities recovered Rs 92.50 lakhs in cash and jewellery worth Rs 1.5 crore from Nupur Borah's residence *PHOTO: FB*

Officer amassed wealth 400 times of income: CM

GUWAHATI, 16 SEPT

An Assam Civil Service (ACS) officer, Nupur Borah, was arrested for allegedly amassing assets 400 times greater than her known income, according to Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. Following searches at her residences, authorities recovered over Rs 92.50 lakh in cash and approximately Rs 1.5 crore in jewellery.

Borah, who was serving as Circle Officer in Goraimari, Kamrup at the time of her arrest, is facing more than just suspension or dismissal. "We have to ensure penal measures through the legal process," Sarma said, urging the public to report any bribery attempts by officials.

The Chief Minister also stated that Borah had been under surveillance for six months due to her involvement in an illegal land transfer deal previously. The police confirmed that the cash recovered is the largest amount seized so far in such a raid. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

BMW accident: No alcohol found in accused's body

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

Gaganpreet, the main suspect in the BMW car crash that resulted in the death of senior Finance Ministry official Navjot Singh, 52 and left his wife injured, has tested negative for alcohol, an official confirmed. Singh, a Deputy Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs, died after his motorcycle was struck by Gaganpreet's vehicle near Dhaula Kuan on Sunday, while returning from Bangla Sahib Gurdwara. Gaganpreet was driving with her husband, two children, and a maid at the time of the incident. The entire family, residing in Gurugram and engaged in manufacturing, suffered injuries and were hospitalised. A case was filed. Gaganpreet was arrested and placed in two-day judicial custody.—*PTI*

UP boy loses dad's money in online game, ends life

LUCKNOW, 16 SEPT

A boy from the Mohanlalganj in Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow took his own life after losing his father's entire Rs 14 lakh bank balance while playing an online game. The student, 13, hanged himself in a fit of panic shortly after his father discovered the funds were missing during a visit to the bank on 15 September. In a state of distress, the boy retreated to his rooftop room under the guise of studying. His sister later discovered him unconscious that night. Family members rushed him to a community health centre, where he was pronounced dead. Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Fallen soldiers' kin in Chhattisgarh to get Rs 50L

RAIPUR, 16 SEPT

The Chhattisgarh government has decided to increase the financial assistance for the families of soldiers hailing from the state, who sacrifice their lives during war or military operations, from Rs 20 lakh to Rs 50 lakh. The amount for gallantry award recipients was also hiked from Rs 40 lakh to Rs 1 crore, and 'Jangi Inaam' grant given to parents of soldiers was increased from Rs 5,000 per year per annum. Soldiers disabled in war and military operations will get Rs 30 lakh. Additionally, serving soldiers, ex-servicemen, widows and dependants will now receive a stamp duty exemption up to Rs 25 lakh on their first purchase of house or a plot of land.—*PTI*

Lawyer suspended for posts against judiciary in Odisha

CUTTACK, 16 SEPT

A lawyer was suspended by the Odisha State Bar Council for two years for allegedly making "derogatory" posts on social media against judicial officers, state judiciary and the bar council by using a fake profile. The bar council suspended Bhadrak-based advocate Hemant Kumar Nayak, who was enrolled as a member of the council in 1998. After creating a fake profile on Facebook by making slight changes in his name, he has been making defamatory posts against the judiciary. Ignoring repeated show-cause notices issued by the disciplinary committee, he questioned the powers of the bar council on social media, the bar council said. Nayak could not be reached for a comment.—*PTI*

Heavy rains wreak havoc in U'khand

Roads, buildings damaged, over 200 students trapped as floods inundate institute's campus

DEHRADUN, 16 SEPT

Cloudbursts and heavy rains overnight left a trail of destruction in Uttarakhand's capital Dehradun and its neighbouring areas on Tuesday,

Sahastradhara, Maldevta, Santla Devi and Dalanwala were the worst-hit by the disaster.

Several roads, houses and shops were damaged while a bridge was washed away. Five people were swept away by the torrential waters.

The Tamsa river, on the banks of which the famous Tapkeshwar temple is located, is flowing very close to the danger mark. The Ganga and the Yamuna are flowing close to the warning level.

The Tamsa swelled rapidly in the morning, inundating the temple and submerging the gigantic Hanuman statue near its entrance up to the shoulders.

Teams are engaged in relief and rescue operations in the affected areas, while 300 to 400 people have already been moved to safety.

About 200 children trapped by waterlogging at the Devbhoomi Institute campus in Paundha area of Dehradun were rescued by an SDRF team.

Waterlogging in Tehri left people stranded at Geeta Bhawan. Also, a road in Nainital has been blocked by debris brought by a landslide triggered by heavy rain.

Residents of Majhara village were on the road, having survived what they called a landslide that hit their dwellings early in the morning. They claimed that some people have gone missing.

The Union government stands firmly with the people of Uttarakhand in this hour of crisis, a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office said.

Scenes of devastation following a cloudburst and heavy rainfall, in Dehardun in Uttarakhand on Tuesday; A man holds on to an electric post to save himself from the devastating flood waters in Uttarakhand

PHOTO: PTI

Heavy rains caused the Song River to swell, flooding nearby areas.

Sub-divisional Magistrate of Sadar, Hari Giri, said, "The water level is rising, and the flow is very strong right now. No deaths have been reported so far. Tourists were staying in the hotels."

The river endangered a bridge in Maldevta, prompting the administration to respond quickly to restore normalcy.

Efforts are underway to clear debris on blocked roads in several areas. —*PTI*

3 killed in rains in Himachal

SHIMLA, 16 SEPT

Heavy overnight rains triggered massive landslides and flash floods in Himachal Pradesh, killing three members of a family and submerging a bus stand in Mandi district. Many vehicles were swept away and one person was reported missing. The injured were being treated. In Shimla several vehicles were buried.—*PTI*

3 killed in rains in M'rashtra

MUMBAI, 16 SEPT

Two people have died in Maharashtra's Beed and another in Nagpur amid heavy rains. Over 20 were evacuated. Heavy rains pounded five of eight districts in Marathwada on Monday. Rivers ran in spate and low-lying areas were flooded, disrupting normal life. Ahilyanagar and Beed are badly hit. —*PTI*

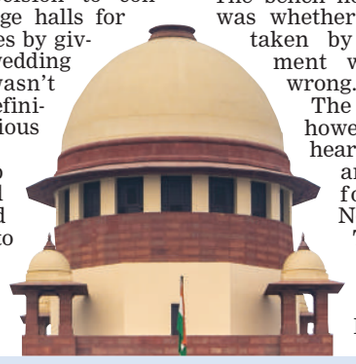
Temple funds are not public funds: SC

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the money offered by devotees was not meant for the construction of marriage halls as it refused to stay an order which said temple funds couldn't be treated as public or government funds.

The order of the Madurai bench of the Madras High Court had quashed the government orders allowing the construction of marriage halls with funds belonging to five temples at different locations in Tamil Nadu.

The high court held the government's decision to construct marriage halls for rental purposes by giving them for wedding functions wasn't within the definition of "religious purposes".



The top court instead suggested such money to be utilised for charitable purposes such as education and towards medical institutions.

The bench noted the issue was whether the decision taken by the government was right or wrong.

The apex court, however, agreed to hear the challenge and posted it for 19 November.

The high court decision came on a plea challenging the government orders allowing the construction of marriage halls with temple funds.

The government orders was stated to have revealed the statement of the Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department who during the budget speech i n the assembly announced the construction of marriage halls in 27 temples by spending temple funds to the tune of Rs 80 crore.

The petitioner said that temple funds weren't meant for commercial purposes. —*PTI*

The appeal claimed that a faulty investigation could not be the ground for acquitting the accused in the Malegaon blast ***PHOTO: PTI***

HC refuses to hear against Malegaon blast acquittal

MUMBAI, 16 SEPT

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday said it was "not an open gate for everyone" to file an appeal against acquittal in the 2008 Malegaon blast case, and sought details if family members of the victims were examined as witnesses in the trial.

The court heard an appeal filed by the family members of the six persons who lost their lives in the blast against the acquittal judgment.

The appeal challenged a special court judgment acquitting the seven accused, including former BJP MP Pragya Singh Thakur and Lt Col Prasad Purohit.

The family members' advocate said that the first appellant, Nisar Ahmed, whose son died in the blast, was not a witness in the trial.

The court said Ahmed should have been a witness.

The appeal claimed a faulty probe could not be the ground for acquitting the accused. It said there was no direct evidence as the conspiracy was hatched secretly. On 29 September 2008, an explosive device strapped to a motorcycle went off near a mosque in Malegaon, killing six persons and injuring 101 others. —*PTI*

Elgar Parishad: Mahesh Raut gets interim bail

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday granted interim bail to Elgar Parishad-Bhima Koregaon case accused Mahesh Raut on medical grounds. The court heard Raut's petition challenging his incarceration despite being granted bail by the Bombay High Court. His counsel said he suffered from rheumatoid arthritis. The high court stayed its own order on the National Investigation Agency's request. —*PTI*

SC takes suo motu of pollution in R'than river

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

The Supreme Court has taken suo motu cognisance of the industrial waste discharge into Rajasthan's Jojari river, predominantly from textile and tile factories. The court highlighted that this pollution affects hundreds of people villages, rendering drinking water unsafe for both humans and animals. It directed that the matter be brought before the Chief Justice for further action.—*PTI*

SC protects Alok Nath in marketing scam

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday protected actor Alok Nath from arrest in a fraud case related to an alleged shady marketing scheme in Haryana. Notices were issued to Haryana police and others on the actor's plea. Petitioner, Vipul Antil alleged Nath and actor Shreyas Talpade promoted the Human Welfare Credit Cooperative Society Ltd, as brand ambassadors. Victims were lured to invest in it. —*PTI*

Online betting app: Robin Uthappa, Yuvraj Singh, Sonu Sood summoned

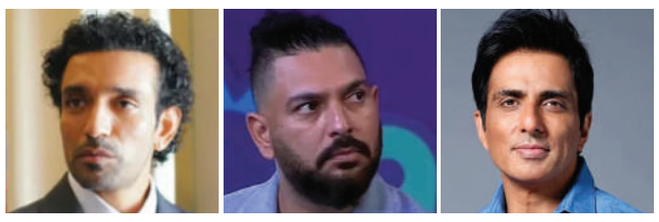
NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned former cricketers Robin Uthappa and Yuvraj Singh, and actor Sonu Sood for questioning in an alleged illegal online betting app linked money laundering case.

The three were asked to depose during the next week and get recorded their statements in a case linked to a platform named 1xBet.

Former cricketers Suresh Raina and Shikhar Dhawan were also questioned as part of this investigation.

ED also recorded the statement of former TMC MP and actor Mimi Chakraborty in this case.



Robin Uthappa, Yuvraj Singh and Sonu Sood were asked to depose next week and recored their statements in the case ***PHOTO: PTI***

Bengali actor Ankush Hazra appeared before the ED on his scheduled summons, while actor Urvashi Rautela, the India brand ambassador of 1xBet, is yet to appear on her given date.

The probe pertains to alleged illegal betting apps that are stated to have duped numerous people and investors worth crores of rupees or have evaded a huge amount of taxes.

1xBet is a globally recognised bookmaker with 18 years in the betting industry.

The brand's customers can place bets on thousands of sporting events. —*PTI*

ABDUCTION CASE

Puja Khedkar's father bodyguard absconding

THANE, 16 SEPT

The father of former IAS probationer Puja Khedkar and her bodyguard, accused of abducting a truck driver in an SUV after a road rage incident in Navi Mumbai, remain missing with the vehicle since 14 September.

Khedkar's mother Manorama also went into hiding.

The abducted driver, identified as Prahlad Kumar, 22, was rescued from Khedkar's house on 14 September.

The incident unfolded on the Mulund-Airoli Road in Navi Mumbai after the concrete mixer truck driven by Kumar grazed a Land Cruiser, sparking an argument with the SUV's two occupants, the accused's father Dilip Khedkar and his bodyguard, Praful Salunkhe. They allegedly bundled Kumar in the SUV and took him to Puja bungalow.

A case was registered against Manorama for unleashing two dogs inside the gate to scare the police team. —*PTI*

Woman cop beaten to death by spouse in MP

SIDHI, 16 SEPT

A woman head constable was allegedly bludgeoned to death with a baseball bat by her husband in Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh, apparently following a heated argument over cooking.

The incident took place on Monday night at the couple's residence in police quarters.

Deceased Savita Saket was posted on duty at the Kamarji police station in the district, while her husband Virendra Saket was self-employed.

After committing the crime, the man escaped from the spot and efforts were on to trace him.

Her body was sent for a post-mortem procedure and was later cremated, he said.

Talking to reporters, DIG Chauhan said, "Efforts are on to arrest the accused and blockades have been put up at various places with this intention."

Savita's daughter Anchal Saket demanded death penalty for her father.

"When my mother is no more, he (father) has no right to live," she said.

According to Anchal, as per the information given by her mother over the phone, there was a heated argument between the couple over cooking.

Anchal said she informed the neighbours about this, but by the time they reached their house, her father had fled from the spot.

The baseball bat was recovered. —*PTI*

14 men rape boy for 2 years in Kerala; 9 arrested

KASARAGOD, 16 SEPT

Nine individuals, including two government employees, have been apprehended for allegedly sexually assaulting a 16-year-old boy over a two-year period after befriending him through a mobile app aimed at the LGBTQ community, police reported on Tuesday.

A senior police officer stated that the assaults occurred at various locations, including the boy's home and areas within Kannur and Kozhikode districts, involving a total of 14 men. The situation came to light when the boy's mother spotted a man fleeing their home.

Upon questioning her son, he revealed the abuse, leading her to contact Childline, which then alerted the police. According to the officer, "14 separate cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, have been registered." A Special Investigation Team has been formed to probe the incidents. —*PTI*

ANOTHER ODISHA HORROR

Manhunt on in student's gangrape

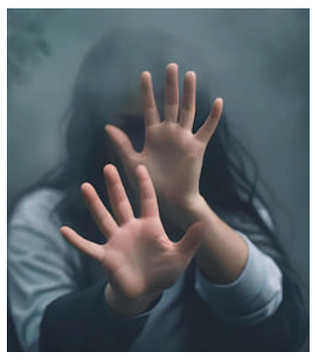
BHUBANESWAR, 16 SEPT

A manhunt was underway for one more person in connection with the gangrape of a Dalit college student near a beach in Odisha's Puri.

The 19-year-old woman and her boyfriend was sitting in the Casurina forest near the Baliharchandi temple on 15 September when a group of youths clicked their photos and videos, and asked them to pay in return for deleting those, police said.

When they refused to pay, two youths in the group raped the woman while the others assaulted her boyfriend and tied him to a tree.

Three persons were arrested, while a manhunt is underway for one more accused, he added.



Among those arrested are Siba Sahoo and Manoj Sahoo alias Kalia, who allegedly raped the woman, the police said.

Senior BJD leader Sanjay Das Burma, the former MLA of the area, attacked the BJP-led government in the state over the incident.

He said the government should ensure proper security of the Baliharchandi temple and its surrounding area, which is a popular spot. Safety of tourists must be ensured at all cost.

Lakhs of tourists come to the seaside town of Puri every year to visit the 12th-century Jagannath temple, one of the four 'dhams' in Hinduism. The famed Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath also happens in this town.

In a similar incident, a college student who was out with her boyfriend was gangraped at the famous Gopalpur beach in Ganjam district on June 15.

Ten people were arrested in the case. —*PTI*

WHAT A VIEW

A viral video from Nagpur shows the Rs 998 cr Indore-Dighori under construction flyover slicing through the balcony of a residential building, raising eyebrows over urban planning. According to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) officials, the balcony was asked to be removed as it falls under an encroached area. However, the house owner claimed that the flyover does not pose a threat to safety as its beam does not touch the building and was just passes through the balcony

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Economic assault: J&K mkts suffer due to closure of NH

Leaders of various parties, including the ruling NC, on Wednesday flayed the closure of the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway during the peak fruit season, saying it was a "deliberate ploy" to harm Jammu and Kashmir's economy and demanded immediate movement of fruit-laden trucks towards the markets across the country.

Fruit-laden trucks from Kashmir have been stranded for days due to the closure of the crucial highway following heavy rains and flash floods, with growers expressing apprehensions of losses.

The 270 km-long Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH44) was closed for nine consecutive days following heavy rainfall last month. It was reopened last week, but only for light motor vehicles.

Speaking with reporters in Shopian, ruling National Conference Lok Sabha MP Ruhullah Mehdi

alleged, "There is a pattern, sometimes substandard pesticide is sold, sometimes cheaper apples are imported, and sometimes highway is closed. Our horticulture contributes more than 75 per cent to our GDP. It contributes seven times more than tourism. But, there is a pattern of a war against our horticulture".

The Lok Sabha MP from Srinagar said even when the highway has been opened for traffic, "the stranded trucks from Srinagar have not been allowed to move to Jammu".

"If trucks from Jammu are allowed to move towards Srinagar, why are our fruit-laden trucks not allowed to move? Before this, a year or so ago, our fruit-laden trucks were stopped on the highway deliberately, and the fruit was left to rot. There is a clear pattern of an attack on our economy. The closure of the highway is a part of that," he charged, adding, "it is being done deliberately".

PDP leader Iltija Mufti called on J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and apprised him of the "crisis" being faced

The 270 km-long Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH44) was closed for nine consecutive days following heavy rainfall last month. Rotting apples have left traders in despire ***PHOTO: PTI***

by the Union Territory's apple industry owing to the closure of the national highway over the past few weeks.

Awami Itihaad Party (AIP) said the"blockade" of the highway was "nothing short of an economic assault" on Kashmir, and demanded immediate movement of fruit-laden trucks towards the markets across the country.

The AIP staged a protest at the Press Colony here, demanding immediate clearance of fruit-laden trucks stranded on the highway.

Scores of AIP activists, led by party's MLA from Langate, Sheikh Khursheed, raised slogans of "Save Apple, Save Kashmir" and accused the administration of "deliberately choking" the Valley's horticulture economy.

Speaking to reporters, Khursheed said the blockade was "nothing short of an economic assault" on Kashmir.

The protestors were later dispersed by police, which also detained several leaders and activists of the party, including the MLA Langate.

Senior CPI(M) leader and MLA Kulgam MY Tarigami said the "prolonged closure" of the highway has hit the fruit growers in the valley hard, and urged the Centre to take urgent steps to facilitate the apple trucks to reach the markets across the country.

He said the Centre should take urgent steps to facilitate the apple trucks to reach the market.

The MLA Kulgam said the recent floods have caused heavy losses to human lives, properties, and standing crops in J&K.

"Due to intermittent rains, leaves and apple have been falling prematurely from trees, bringing huge losses to growers. Sher-i-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) should have has guided and offered timely advice to farmers about preventive measures," he said.

Tarigami said the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission on distressed agriculture remain mostly un-implemented. J&K, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand have been hit hard, yet apple has not been brought under the recommendations for the Minimum Support Price (MSP).

"Despite big claims by authorities regarding Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna (PMFBY), the main crop of the farmers i.e. apple production has not been covered under this scheme. These are crops with almost no significant losses, while apple, the most vulnerable crop, is excluded.

"Insurance companies and the Agriculture Insurance Company, have reportedly earned hundreds of crores of premium since 2016 but remain reluctant to insure apple crop," he said.

The CPI(M) leader said there is an urgent need to reintroduce the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) so that rotten apples can be procured and used for juice and jam manufacturing.

If the Centre does not support this, the UT administration must bring the scheme under the CAPEX Budget to compensate growers, he added.

The MLA Kulgam said there is an acute shortage of cold storage facilities in the valley despite big announcements regarding availability of government land which could have been used for the purpose.

"The government cannot remain indifferent. Protecting horticulture means protecting the livelihood of farmers which remains the backbone of Kashmir's economy," he said.

He said the Centre should announce sufficient relief to help the floods victims and apple growers and traders who have suffered huge losses because of inclement weather, floods and the blockade of the highway. *—PTI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

Teen social media ban: Aus against age check for all

Australian authorities said Tuesday that social media platforms should not demand age verification for all account holders starting from December, when a ban on children under 16 having accounts goes into effect in the country.

The government released guidelines on how platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Reddit, X and Instagram should apply the world's first ban on children using social media from 10 December. It says verifying the ages of all account holders would be unreasonable.

"We think it would be unreasonable if platforms reverified everyone's age," said Australia's eSafety Commissioner **Julie Inman Grant**, who drafted the guidelines. Her use of the word "reverified" suggested the platforms usually already had sufficient data to verify a user was older than 16. She said the platforms have "targeting technology" to focus on those under 16.

"They can target us with deadly precision when it comes to advertising. Certainly they can do this around the age of a child," she added.

Australia's Parliament enacted the ban last year, giving the platforms a year to work out its implementation. The platforms face fines of up to 50 million Australian dollars (USD 33 million) for systemic failures to prevent children younger than 16 from holding accounts.

Critics of the legislation fear that banning young children from social media will impact the privacy of

- Australia's Parliament enacted the ban last year, giving the platforms a year to work out its implementation. The platforms face fines of up to 50 million Australian dollars (USD 33 million) for systemic failures to prevent children younger than 16 from holding accounts.

all users who must establish they are older than 16.

Inman Grant said claims the ban would see every Australian account holder subjected to age verification as a "scare tactic."

Communications Minister Anika Wells said the government seeks to keep platform users' data as private as possible.

"These social media platforms know an awful lot about us" already, Wells said. "If you have been on, for example, Facebook since 2009, then they know you are over 16. There is no need to verify."

Wells and Inman Grant will travel to the United States next week to discuss the guidelines with the platforms' owners.

Inman Grant said the platforms would need to demonstrate to her agency that they were taking "reasonable steps" to exclude children younger than 16.

"We don't expect that every under-16 account is magically going to disappear on 10 December," Inman Grant said. "What we will be looking at is systemic failures to apply the technologies, policies and processes."

Melbourne's RMIT University expert on information sciences Lisa Given told Australian Broadcasting Corp. that the government's approach acknowledges that age verification technologies make errors.

"It's going to be up to each of the platforms to determine how they're going to comply and it will be interesting to see if they test the limits of the definition of reasonable steps,'" Given said.

In November, 2024, the Australian government became the first country to announce what it described as world-leading legislation that would institute an age limit of 16 years for children to start using social media, and hold platforms responsible for ensuring compliance.

The legislation sought to safeguard children's mental health and exposure to harmful online activities, sources said.

According to sources, the legislation was introduced in Parliament during its final two weeks of session, which began on 18 November 2024. The age limit was set to take effect 12 months after the law was passed. *—PTI*

The government released guidelines on how social media platforms should apply the world's first ban on children using social media from 10 December ***PHOTO: AI***

Conflicts, disasters & aid cuts 'perfect storm' for acute hunger, says UN

A string of natural disasters and global conflicts, combined with drastic cuts to international aid means that some of the world's neediest people are suffering from serious food shortages, and will face further reductions in assistance soon, a United Nations official said Tuesday.

Carl Skau, deputy executive director and chief operating officer of the World Food Programme, said that with needs rising and funding dropping, the agency is pushing every efficiency it can find, promoting greater self-reliance in the communities it helps, and looking for new sources of donations to help fill the growing gap.

"We are managing globally a perfect storm... with food security needs going up dramatically," Skau told The Associated Press during a visit to Bangkok, where he was to meet with Thai officials to press for assistance, following a trip to India.

"We've seen a three-fold increase only in the past five years, and this year has been really tough also with conflict increasing, extreme climate events and on top of that we now have a funding crunch where the WFP is losing some 40 per cent of our funding."

In the region, he said recent flooding in Pakistan and a massive earthquake and drought in neighbouring Afghanistan have exacerbated already difficult situations in both countries, leaving millions in need.

In Afghanistan there has been a surge in malnutrition recorded, particularly in young children, over the last few months ***PHOTO: PTI***

The decision by US President Donald Trump earlier this year to cut more than 90 per cent of the United States Agency for International Development's foreign aid contracts and USD 60 billion in overall assistance around the world — coupled with cuts to international aid from several European countries — has meant that the WFP and others have less means to respond, he said.

"In Afghanistan two years ago we were assisting 10 million people, today we are at around 1.5 (million) and we don't have the resources to preposition food in areas that won't be accessible during the winter," Skau said.

Already in Afghanistan, there has been a surge in malnutrition recorded, particularly among young children, over the last few months, he said.

"We know that through this winter, children will die and it's not only about children dying, I mean when children are severely, acutely malnourished, there are damages to their brains and to their organs that will remain with them for their life," Skau said.

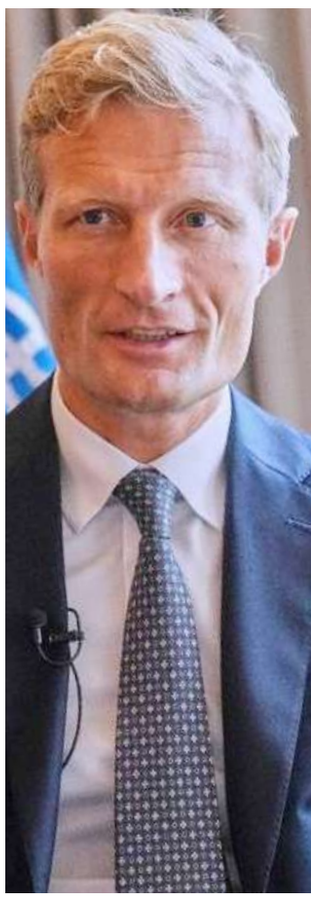
Meantime, conflicts in Myanmar, Sudan and Gaza have made it extremely difficult to reach people in need, and the latter two are already facing famine conditions. A 7.7 magnitude earthquake in Myanmar in March has led to even greater needs there, and new challenges in reaching people with humanitarian assistance.

The civil war in Myanmar has also meant that even more Rohingya refugees have fled to Cox's Bazar in neighbouring Bangladesh, and there are no immediate prospects for them to safely return home, Skau said. "So we have a situation where we basically have 1.3 million people in a camp that is like a prison where they do 100 per cent depend on international assistance," said Skau, who visited Cox's Bazar earlier this month.

The WFP currently provides refugees there with a USD 12 monthly voucher for food that has been enough for them to survive, but with funding running out for that by the end of November, it may have to either reduce the amount or the number of people it supports.

When the agency temporarily had to reduce monthly assistance to USD 8 in 2023, it saw tension and violence spike in the camp and people turning to criminality, and many desperate people piling into boats to head to Indonesia, Malaysia or elsewhere, Skau said.

"There are all kinds of negative implications," he said. "Frankly, regional stability is somewhat at stake here, and that also has implications beyond the immediate region." *—PTI*



COO of World Food Programme Carl Skau ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

Indian part of UN panel claiming genocide in Gaza

GENEVA, 16 SEPT

The United Nations commission of inquiry that said Israel has committed genocide in Gaza has an Indian as part of its panel. Miloon Kothari, an Indian expert on housing and land rights, is part of the three-member expert panel. From 2000-2008, Kothari was the first special rapporteur on adequate housing with the United Nations Human Rights Council. He led the process that resulted in the current global operational human rights standard on the practice of forced evictions. The panel is chaired by Navi Pillay, a South African former UN human rights chief. The other member is Australian human rights lawyer Chris Sidoti. Three of the members on the team are set to resign, reportedly due to budget cuts, largely driven by Trump. *—Agencies*

Chinese, Philippine ships collide in South China Sea

BEIJING, 16 SEPT

Tensions escalated as China's coast guard accused a Philippine ship of deliberately ramming one of its vessels near Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea, claimed by both nations. The coast guard claimed over ten Philippine ships entered the waters, prompting the use of water cannons against them. This incident followed China's announcement to designate part of the shoal as a national nature reserve. The Philippine government announced its intent to file a diplomatic protest. China blamed the Philippines for the collision, calling it "provocative and egregious." Following the clash, China dispatched its new aircraft carrier 'Fujian', the most advanced of the three aircraft carriers, to the Sea. *—PTI*

Appeals court bins Trump's attempt to fire Fed's Cook

WASHINGTON, 16 SEPT

The appeals court ruled that Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook can remain in her role, rejecting President Donald Trump's attempt to dismiss her on charges of mortgage fraud, while the Senate confirmed Stephen Miran to the board. The court found her due process rights were violated as she was denied a formal opportunity to respond to allegations. Trump is now poised to appeal to the Supreme Court as the Federal Reserve prepares for a key interest rate vote. Cook, the first Black woman on the board, maintains her innocence against the allegations of fraud. Miran, meanwhile, a key loyalist to Trump, was appointed after a closely contested 48-47 vote. *—PTI*

Hollywood star Robert Redford dies at 89

PROVO, 16 SEPT

Robert Redford, the Oscar-winning director, liberal activist and champion of independent cinema, died Tuesday at 89. Publicist Cindi Berger said Redford passed away "at his home at Sundance in the mountains of Utah, surrounded by those he loved." No cause was given. Rising to stardom in the 1960s, he became one of Hollywood's biggest names in the 1970s with 'The Candidate', 'All the President's Men' and 'The Way We Were'. He won the best director Oscar for 'Ordinary People' (1980), which also won best picture. Redford's most enduring pairing was with Paul Newman in the 1969 smash Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, which inspired his Sundance Institute and festival. *—PTI*

Israel's assault on Gaza is a genocide, says UN body

GENEVA, 16 SEPT

A team of independent experts commissioned by the United Nations' Human Rights Council has concluded that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. Its Tuesday report says that the international community has an obligation to end the genocide and take steps to punish those responsible.

"On the basis of fully conclusive evidence, the Commission finds that statements made by Israeli authorities are direct evidence of genocidal intent," the report concluded. "The Commission concludes that the Israeli authorities and Israeli security forces have the genocidal intent to destroy, in whole or in part, the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip."

After a painstaking legal analysis, the three-member team said Israel had committed four of the five "genocidal acts" defined under an international convention adopted in 1948 known colloquially as the "Genocide Convention".

"The Commission finds that Israel is responsible for the commission of genocide in Gaza," said Navi Pillay, the commission chair. "It is clear that there is an intent to destroy the Palestinians in Gaza through acts that meet the criteria outlined in the Genocide Convention."

Her commission concluded that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as Israeli President Isaac Herzog and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, had incited the genocide. It hasn't assessed whether other Israeli leaders had done so too.

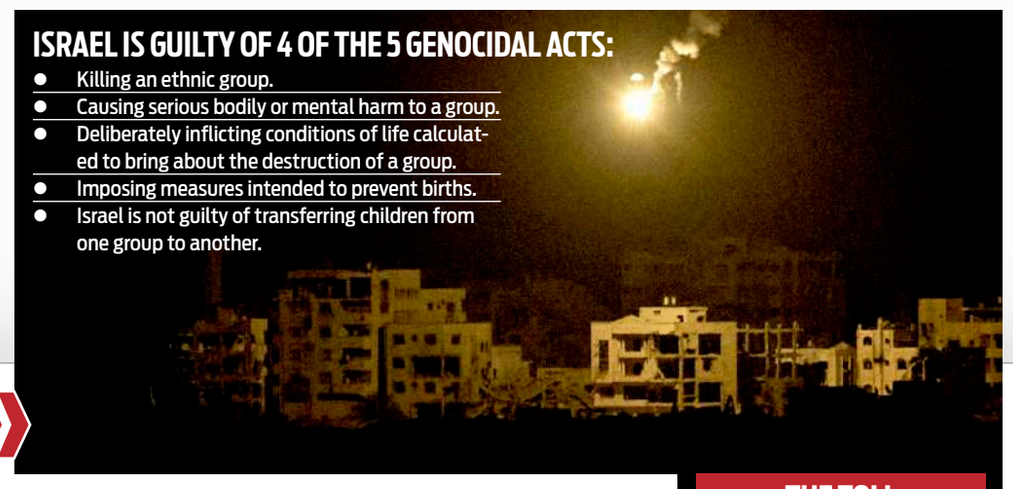
The commission said it pored over the conduct of Israeli security forces and "explicit statements" by Israeli civilian and military authorities.

"The absence of action to stop (the genocide) amounts to complicity," she said. "All States are under a legal obligation to use all means.... to stop the genocide."

—Salar News with agencies

ISRAEL IS GUILTY OF 4 OF THE 5 GENOCIDAL ACTS:

- Killing an ethnic group.
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to a group.
- Deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the destruction of a group.
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births.
- Israel is not guilty of transferring children from one group to another.



A flare drifts over buildings destroyed during the Israeli ground and air operations in the Gaza Strip *PHOTO: PTI*

'Gaza is burning', as Israel kills over 89

Israel begins ground invasion of Gaza City

JERUSALEM, 16 SEPT

Defence Minister Israel Katz said that "Gaza is burning" as Israeli military announced Tuesday that its expanded operation in Gaza City have begun. Palestinians describe the onslaught as the most intense bombardment in the two-year long assault.

Israeli officials, however, said that the ground invasion was still in its nascent stage, after asking residents to evacuate the city so that the military could "destroy Hamas' military infrastructure".

At least 89 people were killed in the attacks and hundreds wounded, with the death toll likely to mount. An estimated 1 million Palestinians were living in the region around Gaza City before the evacuation warnings.

"The (Israel military) is striking with an iron fist," Katz said. "We will not go back until the completion of the mission."

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio left Israel and arrived in Qatar, a major US ally which Israel struck last week. He plans to meet with its ruling Emir.

"We think we have a very short window of time in which a deal can happen," Rubio said before leaving Israel. "We don't have months anymore, and we probably have days and maybe a few weeks."

However, the families of the hostages protested overnight outside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's house, urging him to stop the onslaught.

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry said Israel is turning Gaza City into "a mass graveyard".

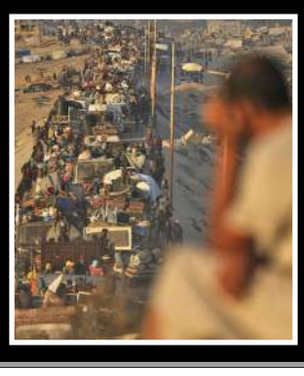
"It considers this a deliberate targeting of civilians, turning Gaza City into a mass graveyard and an uninhabitable land... and pushing nearly a million Palestinians into displacement and movement within a tight circle of death," it said.

Meanwhile, Israel attacked Yemen's Red Sea port. *—Agencies*

THE TOLL

At least **64,871** people have been killed since 7 Oct. According to leaked documents, Israel's military says 84% of them are civilians.

Over 90% of homes are estimated to be damaged or destroyed. Experts have declared a famine in Gaza.



GCC to activate joint defence mechanism

DOHA, 16 SEPT

Several Arab and Islamic held an emergency summit in Doha, Qatar after Israel attacked the gulf nation. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) pledged on Monday to "activate a joint defence mechanism," but there was no other major concrete action.

The GCC, which comprises of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, said the consultations were underway among the bloc's military bodies to build up "Gulf deterrent capabilities" for the defence pact.

The summit was held in response to Israel's strikes on Doha, which killed at least six people, including Hamas' chief negotiator.

Qatari Emir **Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani** opened the summit by calling the Israeli bombing "blatant, treacherous, and cowardly".

Other nations, such as Iran, which recently had a 12-day war with Israel, and Egypt used a similar rhetoric to describe Israel. Egypt's President, Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, called Israel "an enemy".

Meanwhile, hundreds attended the funeral services in Yemen for the 31 local reporters killed in Israel's attacks last week.

DID BIBI CALL TRUMP?

US President Donald Trump again denied knowing about Israel's attacks on Qatar beforehand, deviating from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's claims. "No, no, they didn't (inform me)," Trump said.

However, Israel insisted that Netanyahu personally spoke to Trump 50 minutes before the planes took off.

—Salar News with Agencies

Trump to sign major nuke, tech deals with Starmer in UK

LONDON, 16 SEPT

US President Donald Trump arrives in the United Kingdom on Tuesday for a state visit during which the British government hopes a multibillion-dollar technology deal will show the transatlantic bond remains strong despite differences over Ukraine, the Middle East and the future of the Western alliance.

Trump's two-day trip comes complete with horse-drawn carriages, military honour guards and a glittering banquet inside a 1,000-year-old castle — all tailored to a president with a fondness for gilded splendour.

King Charles III will host Trump at Windsor Castle before the President holds talks with Prime Minister Keir Starmer at Chequers, the British leader's rural retreat.

"The trip to the UK is going to be incredible," Trump told reporters on Sunday. He said Windsor Castle is "supposed to be amazing".

Starmer is hoping the visit will be dominated by new investment deals.

Already, the UK has announced a nuclear power deal that will see the UK and US accept each other's safety assessments when it comes to small modular reactors.

Starmer and Trump are also due to make announcements on technology and financial services. The technology deal is expected to cover investment in AI, supercomputers and quantum computing.

Another key issue will be the Ukraine war, which has recently spilled over into Romania and Poland, prompting the NATO to scramble its jets in response. *—Agencies*

Senate to probe Kash's competence after Kirk

WASHINGTON, 16 SEPT

Kash Patel is set to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday, facing intense scrutiny regarding the investigation into the assassination of Charlie Kirk and recent firings within the FBI that have raised questions of political retribution. This marks Patel's first significant engagement since his January confirmation and comes amid concerns of unrest within the FBI.

Patel has dismissed five senior officials, who have alleged in a lawsuit that he knowingly carried out illegal firings. Patel will also confront allegations of politicising the FBI, particularly in light of investigations into Trump-era grievances.

Simultaneously, prosecutors are poised to file capital murder charges against Tyler Robinson, 22, who allegedly shot Kirk. *—PTI*

No visas to anyone who celebrated Kirk's death

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that "visa revocations are underway" for foreigners who are celebrating right-wing commentator Charlie Kirk's assassination and said that, "America will not host foreigners who celebrate the death of our fellow citizens..... Prepare to be deported. You are not welcome in this country."

Zelenskyy calls for European air defence system

KYIV, 16 SEPT

Russian forces bombarded the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia with rockets overnight, wounding 13 people, including two children, officials said on Tuesday, as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged European leaders to make the continent safe by building an ambitious air defence umbrella.

A peace settlement appears to be no closer despite months of US-led peace efforts. US President Donald Trump's ultimatums and deadlines for Putin to stop the fighting have passed without obvious consequences.

Just over the past two weeks, Zelenskyy said on Telegram, Russia has launched more than 3,500 drones, more than 2,500 powerful glide bombs and almost 200 missiles at targets inside Ukraine.

"Now is the time to implement the joint protection of our European skies with a multilayered air defence system. All the technologies for this are available," Zelenskyy said on Telegram. *—PTI*

Trump sends National Guard to Memphis

WASHINGTON, 16 SEPT

President Donald Trump has ordered the deployment of the National Guard to Memphis to combat crime, marking a significant exercise of presidential power in American cities. In the Oval Office meeting with Republican Tennessee Governor Bill Lee, Trump described the operation as a "replica of our extraordinarily successful efforts" in Washington.

The President stated that, alongside the troops, various federal agencies, including the FBI and DEA, would be involved. *—PTI*

Don bombs another Venezuelan boat, kills 3

WASHINGTON, 16 SEPT

President Donald Trump said the US military again targeted a boat allegedly carrying drugs from Venezuela, killing three aboard the vessel.

"The Strike occurred while these confirmed narcoterrorists from Venezuela were in International Waters transporting illegal narcotics (A DEADLY WEAPON POISONING AMERICANS!) headed to the U.S.," Trump said on Truth Social. "These extremely violent drug trafficking cartels POSE A THREAT to US National Security, Foreign Policy, and vital US Interests."

Trump said the strike was carried out Monday, two weeks after another military strike on what the Trump administration says was a drug-carrying speedboat from Venezuela that killed 11.

The Trump administration has railed specifically against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro. *—PTI*

'RADICAL LEFT MEDIA'

Don sues The New York Times for $15 billion

NEW YORK, 16 SEPT

President Donald Trump filed a $15 billion defamation lawsuit against The New York Times and four of its journalists on Monday, according to court documents.

This comes just after The Times said last week that it was threatened with a lawsuit after it wrote an article on Trump's explicit birthday letter to late sex-trafficker Jeffrey Epstein. Trump denies he ever wrote it.

The lawsuit filed in US District Court in Florida names several articles and one book written by two of the publication's journalists and published in the lead up to the 2024 election, saying they are "part of a decades-long pattern by the New York Times of intentional and malicious defamation against Trump".

"Defendants published such statements negligently, with knowledge of the falsity of the statements," the lawsuit says.

Times spokesman Charles Stadtlander said the lawsuit "lacks any legitimate legal claims and instead is an attempt to stifle and discourage independent reporting."

In a Truth Social post, Trump accused The Times of lying about him and defaming him, saying it has become "a virtual mouthpiece' for the Radical Left Democrat Party."

Trump has gone after other media outlets, including filing a USD 10 billion defamation lawsuit against The Wall Street Journal and media mogul Rupert Murdoch in July after the newspaper published a story reporting on his ties to Epstein. *—PTI*

The British public welcomed US President Donald Trump with a gigantic banner of him with sex-trafficker Jeffery Epstein, outside Windsor Castle, on Tuesday, where he is set to stay with the King *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

Nepal protest victims cremated with state honour

KATHMANDU, 16 SEPT

Funerals of some of the victims of Gen Z protests were performed on Tuesday at Pashupati Aryaghat in Kathmandu with state honour, while some bodies were taken to various districts for cremation.

Four bodies were taken to Pashupatinath near the bank of the Bagmati river for cremation with state honour, an official said.

Minister for Energy and Physical Infrastructure Kulman Ghising and Minister for Home Affairs Om Prakash Aryal joined the family members of the deceased.

The funeral procession started from the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital in Maharajgunj of Kathmandu, where the bodies were kept for postmortem, and ended at Pashupati with thousands present to pay tribute.

Funeral procession for people killed during the protests *PHOTO: PTI*

Seventy-two people, including 3 policemen and 10 prisoners, were among the dead during the protests that toppled the government.

Meanwhile, Indian Ambassador Naveen Srivastava called on Nepal's newly-appointed interim Prime Minister Sushila Karki at her office in Singha Durbar and conveyed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's congratulatory message to her. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Rupee rises by 8P, closes at 88.08 against USD

MUMBAI, 16 SEPT

The rupee appreciated 8 paise to close at 88.08 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, tracking US-India talks on the proposed trade agreement to iron out issues in the wake of steep Trump Tariffs. Forex traders said the rupee strengthened on positive domestic markets and a weak greenback, which is trading at a two-month low ahead of the two-day FOMC meeting commencing Tuesday and disappointing US economic data. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 88.05, then touched an intraday low of 88.16 and a high of 88.01 against the greenback. The domestic unit closed at 88.08 (provisional), a gain of 8 paise over its previous close. Meanwhile, the dollar index fell 0.26 per cent to 97.04. *—PTI*

Ola Electric hits 1M production, unveils RoadsterX+

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

Ola Electric has proudly announced the production of its one-millionth vehicle at its Futurefactory in Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu, achieved in under four years since beginning production in 2021. This milestone underscores the strong demand for its S1 portfolio of electric scooters and the newly launched Roadster X motorcycles. A company spokesperson remarked, "This marks the celebration of every Indian who trusted us and believed in our mission. In four years, we've gone from an idea to becoming India's EV two-wheeler leader." The special edition RoadsterX+ features sustainable design elements, including badges made from recycled copper waste. Additionally, Ola announced its new 4680 Bharat Cell integrated vehicles. *—PTI*

SpiceJet to lease 8 more Boeing 737 planes

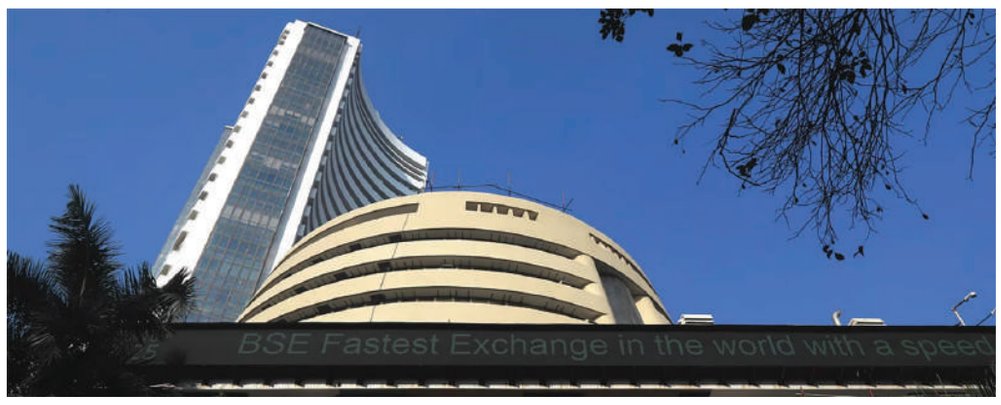
NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

SpiceJet on Tuesday said it has inked lease agreements for inducting eight more Boeing 737 aircraft ahead of the winter schedule. The winter schedule starts in late October. With the latest agreements for 8 Boeing 737 planes, the "airline's planned fleet additions rise to 18 aircraft, reinforcing its commitment to meet the rising demand for air travel during the upcoming festive and winter season," SpiceJet said in a release. As on 15 September, SpiceJet had 19 aircraft in operation out of the total fleet of 53 planes, according to information available on fleet tracking website Planespotter.com. For the three months ended June 2025, the airline reported a net loss of Rs 238 crore. *—PTI*

Govt sets record wheat output target of 119MT

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

The government has set a record wheat production target of 119 million tonnes (MT) for the 2025-26 crop year, marking a 3.47 per cent increase from the previous year, according to the agriculture ministry. For the 2024-25 crop year (July-June), the government had set a wheat production target of 115 million tonnes, with actual output estimated at a record 117.5 million tonnes. Wheat is the main rabi (winter) crop, with sowing beginning from late October and continuing through November. Other rabi crops include jowar, barley, gram and lentil. The total foodgrain production target has been set at 171.14 million tonnes for the 2025-26 rabi season. The government is undertaking crop-wise reviews and will take concrete steps to increase rabi crops output, he pointed out. *—PTI*



Markets rebound optimistic over India-US trade

Sensex up 595 pts, while Nifty climbs 170 pts

MUMBAI, 16 SEPT

Stock markets rebounded on Tuesday with the benchmark Sensex climbing nearly 595 points on renewed optimism over the resumption of the India-US trade talks.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 594.95 points or 0.73 per cent to settle at 82,380.69 following buying in auto and IT shares. During the day, it surged 657.74 points or 0.80 per cent to 82,443.48.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 169.90 points or 0.68 per cent to 25,239.10.

Chief negotiators of India and the US have commenced talks on the proposed trade agreement to iron out issues in the wake of steep tariffs that have created uncertainties for exporters, an official said on Tuesday.

A rally in Asian and US peers also instilled optimism in the domestic stock market ahead of this week's US Federal Reserve policy meeting.

- Chief negotiators of India and the US have commenced talks on the proposed trade agreement to iron out issues in the wake of steep tariffs that have created uncertainties for exporters, official said.

Among Sensex firms, Kotak Mahindra Bank rose the most by 2.55 per cent. Larsen & Toubro, Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti, Bharti Airtel and Tata Steel were also among the major gainers.

Asian Paints and Bajaj Finance closed with losses.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.66 per cent and midcap index went up by 0.62 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, services jumped the most by 1.67 per cent, followed by telecommunication (1.50 per cent), auto (1.43 per cent), teck (1.05 per cent), industrials (1.05 per cent), realty (1.02 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.96 per cent) and commodities (0.90 per cent).

FMCG emerged as the only laggard.

Global cues also remained supportive, with investors betting on a 25-basis-point cut by the Fed in its policy meeting concluding 17 September, he added.

On Monday, the Sensex declined by 118.96 points or 0.15 per cent to settle at 81,785.74 after five days of rally. The Nifty settled lower by 44.80 points or 0.18 per cent to 25,069.20, halting its eight-day uptrend. *—PTI*

Post-floods, NC demands one month extension for I-T filing

JAMMU, 16 SEPT

The National Conference on Tuesday demanded a one-month extension for filing Income Tax Returns (ITRs), considering the "dire situation" across North India which has been reeling under floods and other natural calamities.

The party's provincial President, Rattan Lal Gupta, also strongly urged that the interest on delayed payments related to the Assessment Year 2025-2026 be waived.

"I strongly urge the Union Finance Ministry and the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) to grant a reasonable extension of at least one month for filing ITRs, given the extraordinary situation," he told reporters here.

He said that anything less would amount to denying justice to taxpayers.

The deadline for filing Income Tax Returns for the assessment year 2025-2026 was extended by the CBDT by only one day on Monday night.

The NC leader emphasised that the filing of Income Tax Returns is a statutory obligation, and taxpayers, tax practitioners, and professionals require proper facilities - electricity, internet connectivity, and access to records -- all of which have been severely affected in the flood-hit regions. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Sebi extends settlement period for algo brokers

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

Markets regulator Sebi on Tuesday extended the deadline for the settlement scheme to 16 October for all stock brokers associated with certain algo platforms.

The matter pertains to a settlement scheme for brokers who had allegedly flouted norms by associating with unregulated algo trading platforms.

The scheme period, which commenced in June, was scheduled to conclude on 16 September.

This scheme aims to provide a settlement opportunity to stock brokers linked with specific algo platforms against whom proceedings have already been initiated by Sebi and are currently pending before any authority or forum, like the Adjudicating Officer, Securities Appellate Tribunal, or the courts.

By availing of the benefits of this scheme, the concerned stock brokers may settle the proceedings and seek an expedited conclusion to their cases.

However, actions initiated against stock brokers who choose not to avail this settlement opportunity will continue in accordance with the law. *—PTI*

iPhone 17 cosmic orange out of stock in US, India

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

Apple's iPhone Pro Max 17 in cosmic orange has witnessed a considerable surge in demand, and it has gone out of stock within three days after pre-booking went live for pick-up of the devices at the company's official stores in the US and India, as per information shared by company staff.

In India, the entire iPhone Pro Max series is not available for pre-order with pick-up option at Apple stores, according to information sourced from the Apple India website.

The cosmic orange devices were not available for pre-orders in both iPhone Pro Max and iPhone Pro series in India for the pick-up at store option.

"I am really sorry to inform you, but due to the large number of pre-orders, all the cosmic orange iPhone 17 Pro Max are being sold very fast, due to which, they are not available in any storage variant," an Apple specialist said.

Apple unveiled the iPhone 17 series with the price range of Rs 82,900 to Rs 2,29,900. *—PTI*

TO MEET GROWING DEMAND

Google announces £5B investment in UK AI

CALIFORNIA, 16 SEPT

Google has announced a £5 billion ($6.8 billion) investment in the United Kingdom, unveiling plans to build a new data centre on the outskirts of London. This is to meet the growing demand for its AI-driven services such as Cloud, Search, Maps, and Workspace, Reuters reported.

The announcement came on Tuesday, coinciding with US President Donald Trump's state visit, which is expected to spark a series of transatlantic business deals.

UK Finance Minister Rachel Reeves called the investment "a powerful vote of confidence in the UK economy".

According to Google, the project could generate more than 8,000 jobs annually across British businesses.

The new facility, in Waltham Cross, will be designed with sustainability in mind. For instance, it will recycle excess heat to power nearby homes and businesses. Google also confirmed a partnership with Shell to support grid stability and advance Britain's clean energy transition.

By 2026, Google expects its UK operations — including the data centre and its clean energy initiatives — to run on or near 95 per cent carbon-free energy.

The move is likely to provide a political boost for Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour government, which is banking on private investment to revive economic growth.

ChatGPT parent firm, OpenAI, and chip designer Nvidia are likely to announce billion dollar investments in British data centres this week too. *—Agencies*

The new facility, in Waltham Cross, will be designed with sustainability in mind PHOTO: X

- According to Google, the project could generate more than 8,000 jobs annually across British businesses.

Anti-fraud initiatives cut cybercrime losses by 69%: Airtel

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

PHOTO: AIRTEL

Bharti Airtel on Monday said its anti-fraud initiatives have led to a "significant decline" in cybercrime complaints, citing MHA-I4C data of 68.7 per cent decrease in the value of financial losses and a 14.3 per cent drop in overall cybercrime incidents on its network.

The data analysed by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) - Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) compares key cybercrime indicators from September 2024 (a period prior to the launch of Airtel's Fraud and spam detection solution) with those from June 2025.

"Bharti Airtel today announced that its anti-fraud initiatives have resulted in a significant decline in cybercrime complaints, and that this has been further endorsed by recent information from the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) - Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)," the Sunil Bharti-led telecom company said in a release.

According to the MHA-I4C, there has been a 68.7 per cent decline in the value of financial losses and a 14.3 per cent drop in overall cybercrime incidents on the Airtel network, the telco's release said, emphasising the efficacy of the company's fraud detection solution in curbing cybercrime.

Gopal Vittal, Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Bharti Airtel, informed that in the past one year, the company's AI-powered network solutions have identified over 48.3 billion spam calls and blocked 3.2 lakh fraudulent links.

"However, we see this as small steps in a much larger fight. We will continue to innovate and invest heavily in this area until our networks are free of digital spam and scams," Vittal said. *—PTI*

Nothing raises $200M in Series C funding round

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

Consumer technology firm Nothing on Tuesday said it has raised $200 million (about Rs 1,762 crore) in a Series C funding round, valuing the company at $1.3 billion, to accelerate its efforts to build an AI-native platform where hardware and software converge.

The funding round was led by Tiger Global, with support from existing shareholders, including GV, Highland Europe, and EQT. New strategic backing came from Nikhil Kamath and Qualcomm Ventures, the company said in a statement. The fresh capital will be used to accelerate the company's innovation roadmap and further scale its distribution network.

Alongside the Series C funding, Nothing said it is also preparing for a new 'Community round' to allow its supporters an opportunity to invest in the company.

Nothing is set to open its first flagship store in India this year, while its sub-brand CMF is setting up its global headquarters in the country. *—PTI*

HITS FRESH PEAK

Gold touches ₹1.1L/10g, silver at ₹1.3L/kg

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

Gold price surged Rs 1,800 to touch a fresh peak of Rs 1,15,100 per 10g in the national capital on Tuesday amid a weak US dollar and growing expectations of rate cut by the Federal Reserve.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity appreciated Rs 1,800 to hit a record high of Rs 1,14,600 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes).

In the local bullion market, gold of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity dipped Rs 500 each to close at Rs 1,13,300 and Rs 1,12,800 per 10g in the previous market session.

In addition, silver climbed Rs 570 to hit an all-time high of Rs 1,32,870 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Tuesday.

Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities said, "Traders continue to hold long positions with the key drivers being the anticipated dovish Fed stance and ongoing trade deal developments between the US, India, and China."

In the overseas markets, spot gold rose to scale a fresh peak of USD 3,698.94 per ounce.

Spot silver was quoting 0.10 per cent higher to trade at USD 42.72 per ounce. *—PTI*

The company said that retail prices of pouch milk will remain unchanged as these have always been GST-exempt PHOTO: MOTHER DAIRY

Mother Dairy cuts prices to pass on GST benefits

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

Mother Dairy on Tuesday announced it will pass on GST reduction benefits to consumers, making most of its products, including value-added dairy items and processed foods under the Safal brand, cheaper from 22 September.

The wholly-owned subsidiary of National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) clarified that retail prices of pouch milk -- everyday poly pack milk, including full cream, toned and cow milk -- will remain unchanged as these have always been GST-exempt.

Following the GST revisions, UHT milk (tetra pack) and paneer will attract zero GST instead of the earlier 5 per cent, while other dairy products and value-added horticultural items will see rates drop from 12 per cent to 5 per cent.

The price reductions include toned tetra pack UH milk (1 litre) coming down from Rs 77 to Rs 75, double toned UHT milk (450 ml) from Rs 33 to Rs 32, paneer (200 gm) from Rs 95 to Rs 92, ghee carton pack (1 litre) from Rs 675 to Rs 645, and butter (100 gm) from Rs 62 to Rs 58. *—PTI*

Retailers urged to highlight GST discount: Ministry

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has instructed physical retail chains to prominently display and advertise discounts resulting from the recent Goods and Services Tax (GST) rationalisation. In a communication to the Retailers Association of India, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) stated, "Retailers should reflect the GST reduction in the receipt/bill as GST discount and major focus be given on high impact products."

Retailers are encouraged to advertise the discount through various means, including "posters/flyers and ads (print, TV and online) through their own retail networks." Additionally, the department suggested monitoring sales figures during the festive season for promotional purposes.

From 22 September, nearly 400 products—ranging from soaps to cars—will see price reductions as the GST slab structure shifts.

Daily essentials will be taxed at a reduced rate of 5 per cent, with staples like bread and milk exempt from tax altogether. *—PTI*

GK Energy, Jinkushal & Saatvik set IPO price band

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Solar-powered agricultural water pump systems provider GK Energy on Tuesday announced a price band of Rs 145 to Rs 153 per share for its upcoming Rs 465-crore initial public offering (IPO).

The company's IPO will be open for public subscription from 19 to 23 September.

The company is India's largest pure play provider of engineering, procurement and commissioning (EPC) services for solar-powered agricultural water pump systems.

Additionally, Solar panel maker Saatvik Green Energy also fixed a price band of Rs 442 to Rs 465 per share for its upcoming Rs 900-crore initial public offering (IPO).

At the upper end, the company is valued at around Rs 5,910 crore.

The Haryana-based company's IPO would open for public subscription on 19 September and conclude on 23 September.

Saatvik Green Energy is a solar photovoltaic module manufacturer with an operational capacity of about 3.8 GW as of 30 June, 2025.

Meanwhile, Jinkushal Industries Ltd (JKIPL) is looking to raise Rs 116 crore through its initial share-sale, which will open for public subscription on 25 September.

Based in Chhattisgarh, the company is engaged in export trading of new/customised and used or refurbished construction machines in global markets. *—PTI*

SL to host Pak in games in Women's T20 WC for Blind

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

The Cricket Association for the Blind in India (CABI) on Tuesday added Colombo as a neutral venue to stage matches involving Pakistan during the maiden Women's T20 World Cup. Kathmandu was the original neutral venue, but the CABI informed in a press release that Sri Lanka has been added as an additional host owing to the prevailing volatile situation in Nepal. The shifting of the venue was decided after the Executive Committee of the World Blind Cricket Council (WBCC) held a virtual meeting on Monday. New Delhi and Bengaluru are the other venues of the tournament to be held from 11 November to 25 November. The tournament will feature 21 league matches. Australia, England, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the US will take part. *—PTI*

PHOTO: Lee Kang/X

PSG relieved as Lee fit for Champions League opener

PARIS, 16 SEPT

European champion Paris Saint-Germain won't be as short-handed as initially feared when it begins the defense of its Champions League title. PSG extended its perfect start in Ligue 1 with a fourth straight win over the weekend, but the victory was overshadowed by injuries to Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, Lee Kang-in and Lucas Beraldo, all of whom were forced off the field. But the club said on Tuesday on the eve of hosting Serie A side Atalanta at Parc des Princes that only Beraldo remained "under treatment" after spraining his left ankle. The update came as a relief for PSG, which is already without forwards Ousmane Dembélé and Désiré Doué for the encounter. *—PTI*

Aus legend Jay is HIL team Kalinga Lancers coach

BHUBANESWAR, 16 SEPT

Legendary Australian Jay Stacy was on Tuesday appointed head coach of Hockey India League side Vedanta Kalinga Lancers for the upcoming edition of the tournament, which was revived earlier this year. He will take over from German coach Valentin Altenburg. The 57-year-old tactician made 321 international appearances for Australia and was part of the national side that won three Olympic medals. Stacy retired in 2000 as Australia's most capped international player. The Australian has worked in Australia, Netherlands, and Belgium, and also served as head coach of the Mumbai franchise during HIL 2016 and 2017. The next edition of HIL will tentatively be held in January-February 2026. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Maxwell to play Dean Jones despite ODI retirement

CANBERRA, 16 SEPT

Despite announcing his retirement from ODIs earlier this year, Glenn Maxwell will be seen in 50-over action for his state side Victoria as part of his preparations for the upcoming T20I series against New Zealand, as per ESPNcricinfo.

The 36-year-old has been included in Victoria's 14-member squad for their opening two Dean Jones Trophy matches against Queensland and Tasmania at Allan Border Field on Wednesday and Friday. Interestingly, Maxwell has featured in just one List A match for Victoria since March 2022, against New South Wales in October last year. *—ANI*

Apollo Tyres bags India jersey rights for Rs 579 crore

NEW DELHI, 16 SEPT

Apollo Tyres has been locked in as the new jersey sponsor for the Indian cricket team following the exit of online game platform Dream11, a senior BCCI official told PTI on Tuesday.

The BCCI was left without a shirt sponsor for the team after the government banned real money gaming platforms including Dream 11 under a new legislation.

The team is currently playing the Asia Cup in Dubai without a title sponsor.

"The deal has been signed with Apollo Tyres. We will announce it soon," said a senior BCCI official.

It is reliably learnt that the three-year deal is valued at Rs 579 crore, higher than the Rs 358 crore agreement with Dream 11 for the same duration. The deal with the tyre major covers 121 bilateral games and 21 ICC games.

- The BCCI was left without a shirt sponsor for the team after the government banned real money gaming platforms including Dream 11 under a new legislation

Dream 11 shut down its real money games due to the 'Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act 2025', which states that "no person shall offer any, aid, abet, induce, indulge, engage in offering online money gaming services nor shall involve in any advertisement which directly or indirectly promotes any person to play any online money game". The BCCI had released the invitation for Express of Interest for the team's lead sponsor rights earlier this month, confirming that there will be no shirt sponsor for the ongoing Asia Cup.

The Board had barred companies dealing in real money gaming, cryptocurrency, tobacco, and alcohol from the process.

Apollo Tyres is a multinational company headquartered in Gurugram. The tyre maker has manufacturing units in India and abroad, including Europe. *—PTI*

ASIA CUP HANDSHAKE ROW

ICC rejects PCB's demand to remove Andy Pycroft

ICC clarified ACC informed Pycroft about 'no-handshake'

DUBAI, 16 SEPT

The ICC on Tuesday rejected Pakistan's demand to remove match referee Andy Pycroft from the panel of officials for the ongoing Asia Cup despite the PCB's reported threat of a pullout after blaming the Zimbabwean for the "no handshake" furore that followed the game against India.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) had filed a complaint with the ICC alleging that Pycroft asked its captain Salman Ali Agha not to shake hands with his Indian counterpart Suryakumar Yadav at the time of toss in their Asia Cup match on Sunday.

"Late last night, ICC had sent a reply to PCB stating that Pycroft won't be removed and their plea has been rejected," an ICC source told PTI.

The 69-year-old Zimbabwean is due to officiate Pakistan's final group stage game against the UAE on Wednesday.

Pakistan team manager Naved Cheema had also filed a complaint with the Asian Cricket Council alleging that it was on Pycroft's insistence that team sheets weren't exchanged between the two skippers as is the norm.

After the match that India won by seven wickets, Suryakumar and his men did not exchange handshakes with their cross-border rivals as a mark of respect for the Pahalgam terror attack victims and their families.

Pycroft is one of the senior-most match referees in ICC Elite Panel with 695 international games to his credit (men and women across three formats).

It is reliably learnt that the situation arose due to PCB's Director of Cricket Operations Usman Walha, who didn't apprise his own skipper about the rules and regulations that are to be followed during the tournament.

It is learnt that an irate PCB chief Mohsin Naqvi, who is also the current chairman of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), ordered the sacking of Walha for the embarrassment.

It is understood that PCB is trying to work out a respectable solution by which Pycroft doesn't officiate in their matches. One proposal given by the PCB is to have Richie Richardson stand in its match against the UAE on Wednesday but whether that would happen or not is the big question. *—PTI*

PCB had filed a complaint with ICC alleging that Pycroft asked its captain Salman Ali Agha not to shake hands with Indian counterpart *PHOTO: PTI*

Ponting denies calling India 'sore loser'

Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting has denied a viral quote that was falsely attributed to him in the aftermath of the handshake row. A post surfaced with a picture of Ponting, calling India a "perpetual sore loser", and it went viral.

Later, a version of the post emerged while attributing the quotes to Sky Sports and read, "The way the Pakistani team wanted to shake hands at the end immortalised them as champions of the gentleman's game with India as the perpetual sore loser". On Tuesday, Ponting wrote on X, "Please know that I categorically did not make those statements... about the Asia Cup." *—ANI*

ICC ODI rank: Mandhana reclaims No.1 batter spot

DUBAI, 16 SEPT

Star Indian top-order batter Smriti Mandhana reclaimed her No.1 spot in the latest ICC ODI ranking for women batters released on Tuesday, following her half-century in a losing cause against Australia.

Mandhana struck a 63-ball 58 in the opening game of the three-match series in Mullanpur but her effort went in vain as Australia overhauled the target with ease to go 1-0 up.

The No.1 spot will boost Mandhana's confidence going into the Women's Cricket World Cup, which starts on 30 September.

The half-century was enough for Mandhana to gain seven rating points and move four points ahead of England stalwart Nat Sciver-Brunt, who dropped to second spot. Mandhana has 735 rating points to Sciver-Brunt's 731.

Mandhana first held the No.1 ODI batter ranking in 2019 and has now had two stints in the top position in 2025.

India opener Pratika Rawal, who scored 64, jumped four spots to 42nd, while top-order batter Harleen Deol is now placed 43rd after a well-made 54 against Australia.

For Australia, left-handed stalwart Beth Mooney rose three spots to fifth following her unbeaten 77. *—PTI*

Sindhu ahead, Shetty out at China Masters

SHENZHEN, 16 SEPT

Star India shutter PV Sindhu overcame the first-round hurdle, defeating Julie Dawall Jakobsen of Denmark in straight games to advance to the women's singles pre-quarterfinals of the China Masters Super 750 badminton tournament, here on Wednesday.

Young Ayush Shetty fought hard but lost the men's singles opening-round match to sixth-seeded and world no.5 Chinese Taipei shuttler Chou Tien Chen 19-21 21-12 16-21 in 68 minutes, while the mixed doubles pair of Ruthvika Gadde and Rohan Kapoor too bowed out following a 17-21 11-21 defeat to Yuichi Shimogami and Sayaka Hobara of Japan.

Sindhu, the two-time Olympic medallist, took just 27 minutes to decimate Jakobsen 21-4 21-10. The win for the Indian comes less than 10 days after her opening-round loss in the Hong Kong Open Super 500 tournament where she had lost to another Dane Line Christophersen.

Young Shetty fought bravely but Chen won the decider with ease, making it a hat-trick of losses for the Indian against the Chinese Taipei shuttler this year. However, there was some consolation for the 20-year-old Shetty as he climbed to a career-best BWF ranking of 27 following Hong Kong. *—PTI*

What will happen if Pak pulls out of Asia Cup?

DUBAI, 16 SEPT

Pakistan's reported threat to pull out from the ongoing Asia Cup after demanding ICC match referee Andy Pycroft's removal won't be particularly easy to go ahead with as any such move could result in a revenue loss of anything between USD 12 to 16 million for the country.

Five Test-playing nations -- India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan -- earn 15 per cent each, constituting 75 per cent of the Asian Cricket Council's annual revenue. The remaining 25 per cent is shared by Associate nations. The revenue includes share from broadcast deals, sponsorships, and tickets.

If it pulls out, Pakistan could lose around $16 million out of a projected budget of $227 million for the fiscal year. That will be roughly 7 per cent of the annual PCB revenue gone.

From this Asia Cup alone, the Pakistan Cricket Board's projected earning is between USD 12 and 16 million and any decision of a pullout could well spell doom for a cricketing body which isn't as flush with cash as the BCCI.

Sony Pictures Network India inked an eight-year deal (2024-31) with ACC for $17M. *—PTI*

Diksha Dagar in top-20 of LET Order of Merit

ZUG, 16 SEPT

Diksha Dagar continues to be the top Indian on the Ladies European Tour's Order of Merit in 19th place after the Swiss Ladies Open.

The two-time LET winner took a month-long break and skipped three events, but is still well-placed in the Merit list with half a dozen events left on the schedule.

Diksha, who has five Top-10s this season, including a runner-up place, will play in France next two weeks before coming back home for the Women's Indian Open, where she has finished in the Top-3 in the past.

Behind Diksha is rookie Avani Prashanth (43rd), and she also skipped the Swiss Ladies Open. She will play the La Sella Open in France, the Lacoste Ladies Open de France, and the Indian Open. *—ANI*

Neeraj aims to defend title

TOKYO, 16 SEPT

Indian javelin superstar Neeraj Chopra will begin his World Championship title defence with the qualification round here on Wednesday, taking on a blockbuster field that also features Olympic gold-winning Arshad Nadeem of Pakistan and Diamond League champion Julian Weber of Germany.

Chopra will aim to become the third male javelin thrower in history to defend the World Championships gold he had won in 2023 edition in Budapest.

Czech legend Jan Zelezny (1993, 1995), who is now Chopra's coach, and Anderson Peters (2019, 2022) of Grenada are the other two who have won the world championships crown on two consecutive occasions.

Chopra is set to face Nadeem for the first time after the 2024 Paris Olympics, giving him a chance to avenge his second-place finish in the French capital. Nadeem had won gold in Paris with a monster throw of 92.97m while Chopra had a best of 89.45m that night.

The Chopra-Nadeem clash will, however, not happen on Wednesday as the two rivals have been placed in two different groups in the qualifying round. They are expected to clash in the final round on Thursday.

Weber, Peters, Kenya's 2015 world champion Julius Yego, 2012 Olympic champion Keshorn Walcott of Trinidad and Tobago, veteran Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic as well as Brazil's Luiz da Silva, another 90m thrower, make up the starry field. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

India win just one bout on Day 4 at World C'ship

ZAGREB, 16 SEPT

India's young women wrestlers expectedly struggled at the big stage as two of them were eliminated but the fate of **Vaishnavi Patil** (65kg) and Priya Malik (76kg) was still hanging in balance here Tuesday.

Ankush (50kg) lost her qualification bout 5-6 to Natallia Varakina while Tapsya went down 2-4 to Mexico's Bertha Rojas Chavez.

Both Varakina and Chavez lost their next bouts, shutting the door on the two Indians.

Vaishnavi, daughter of a dhaba owner, began well by getting the better of Latvian wrestler Elma Zeidlere 3-1 but lost 2-4 to Mongolian world number five Enkhjin Tuvshinjargal in the quarterfinals. Competing in the heaviest 76kg weight class, Priya lost her 1/8 round 2-4 to Ecuador's world number five Genesis Reasco Valdez.

If Valdez wins her semifinal against her Cuban rival Milaimy De La Caridad Marin Potrille, Priya will get a repechage round.

In the men's free style, the promising Sujeet Kalkal (65kg) and Vicky (97kg) could not take advantage of their repechage chance. *—PTI*

HISTORY AT FIDE

Have become a better player in this tough yr: Vaishali

SAMARKAND, 16 SEPT

Indian Grandmaster R Vaishali says the FIDE Grand Swiss title triumph here has come at a crucial juncture for her after having endured a year that was "not going" well despite her persistent effort to improve.

Vaishali became the first player to win the elite event in the women's section for a second consecutive time and besides a good prize cheque of USD 40,000 (Rs 35 lakh), Vaishali also earned herself a spot in the next year's Candidates Tournament.

"It's hard to choose," Vaishali said when asked to compare her 2023 victory in the same event with the recent triumph. "In 2023, the Grand Swiss victory came at the very right moment, I hadn't played well for a long time, a lot of things fell into place," she explained.

Vaishali became the third Indian to make the cut for the candidates apart from Divya Deshmukh and Koneru Humpy. The tournament will select the challenger for the next women's World Championship clash against Wenjun Ju of China.

Coming into this year's Grand Swiss, the 24-year-old Chennai player's confidence had hit rock bottom. "In my previous tournament at Chennai GM I lost seven games, I lost one week in a row, I don't know if it's a good thing or a bad thing, then sometimes when I win, I am unstoppable," Vaishali said.

With a total of eight seats up for grabs in the women's candidates, seven are already taken.

Apart from the Indian trio, the Chinese duo of Jiner Zhu and Zhongyi Tan and Russians Aleksandra Goryachkina and Kateryna Lagno are already in the bracket and the last remaining place will be decided soon. *—PTI*

India's GM Vaishali Rameshbabu with her mother and brother R Praggnanandhaa, also a grandmaster, after winning the FIDE Women's Grand Swiss 2025, in Samarkand, Uzbekistan *PHOTO: PTI*